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Riverside Edition

THE POETIC AND DRAMATIC WORKS OF ALFRED LORD TENNYSON

IN SEVEN VOLUMES

VOLUME VII

THE WORKS OF
ALFRED LORD TENNYSON

VII

BECKET

THE FALCON: THE CUP

THE PROMISE OF MAY

CROSSING THE BAR

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BECKET

1884

TO THE LORD CHANCELLOR

THE RIGHT HONORABLE EARL OF SELBORNE

My dear Selborne, — To you, the honored Chancellor of our own day, I dedicate this dramatic memorial of your great predecessor; — which, altho' not intended in its present form to meet the exigencies of our modern theatre, has nevertheless — for so you have assured me — won your approbation. Ever yours,

Tennyson.

BECKET

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

HENRY II. (*son of the Earl of Anjou*).
THOMAS BECKET, *Chancellor of England, afterwards Archbishop of Canterbury.*
GILBERT FOLIOT, *Bishop of London.*
ROGER, *Archbishop of York.*
Bishop of Hereford.
HILARY, *Bishop of Chichester.*
JOCELYN, *Bishop of Salisbury.*
JOHN OF SALISBURY } *friends of Becket.*
HERBERT OF BOSHAM }
WALTER MAP, *reputed author of 'Golias,' Latin poems against the priesthood.*
KING LOUIS OF FRANCE.
GEOFFREY, *son of Rosamund and Henry.*
GRIM, *a monk of Cambridge.*
SIR REGINALD FITZURSE }
SIR RICHARD DE BRITO } *the four knights of the king's household, enemies of Becket.*
SIR WILLIAM DE TRACY }
SIR HUGH DE MORVILLE }
DE BROC OF SALTWOOD CASTLE.
LORD LEICESTER.
PHILIP DE ELEEMOSYNA.
TWO KNIGHT TEMPLARS.
JOHN OF OXFORD (*called the Swearer*).

ELEANOR OF AQUITAINE, *Queen of England* (*divorced from Louis of France*).

ROSAMUND DE CLIFFORD.

MARGERY.

Knights, Monks, Beggars, etc.

PROLOGUE

A Castle in Normandy. Interior of the Hall. Roofs of a City seen thro' Windows

Henry *and* Becket *at chess*

Henry. So then our good Archbishop Theobald
Lies dying.

Becket. I am grieved to know as much.

Henry. But we must have a mightier man than he
For his successor.

Becket. Have you thought of one?

Henry. A cleric lately poison'd his own mother,
And being brought before the courts of the Church,
They but degraded him. I hope they whipt him.
I would have hang'd him.

Becket. It is your move.

Henry. Well — there. [*Moves.*
The Church in the pell-mell of Stephen's time
Hath climb'd the throne and almost clutch'd the crown;
But by the royal customs of our realm
The Church should hold her baronies of me,

Like other lords amenable to law.
I 'll have them written down and made the law.

Becket. My liege, I move my bishop.

Henry. And if I live,
No man without my leave shall excommunicate
My tenants or my household.

Becket. Look to your king.

Henry. No man without my leave shall cross the seas
To set the Pope against me — I pray your pardon.

Becket. Well — will you move?

Henry. There. [*Moves.*

Becket. Check — you move so wildly.

Henry. There then! [*Moves.*

Becket. Why — there then, for you see my bishop
Hath brought your king to a standstill. You are beaten.

Henry (*kicks over the board*). Why, there then — down go bishop and king together.
I loathe being beaten; had I fixt my fancy
Upon the game I should have beaten thee,
But that was vagabond.

Becket. Where, my liege? With Phryne,
Or Lais, or thy Rosamund, or another?

Henry. My Rosamund is no Lais, Thomas Becket;
And yet she plagues me too — no fault in her —
But that I fear the Queen would have her life.

Becket. Put her away, put her away, my liege!
Put her away into a nunnery!
Safe enough there from her to whom thou art bound
By Holy Church. And wherefore should she seek
The life of Rosamund de Clifford more
Than that of other paramours of thine?

Henry. How dost thou know I am not wedded to her?

Becket. How should I know?

Henry. That is my secret, Thomas.

Becket. State secrets should be patent to the statesman
Who serves and loves his king, and whom the king
Loves not as statesman, but true lover and friend.

Henry. Come, come, thou art but deacon, not yet bishop,
No, nor archbishop, nor my confessor yet.
I would to God thou wert, for I should find
An easy father confessor in thee.

Becket. Saint Denis, that thou shouldst not. I should beat
Thy kingship as my bishop hath beaten it.

Henry. Hell take thy bishop then, and my kingship too!
Come, come, I love thee and I know thee, I know thee,
A doter on white pheasant-flesh at feasts,
A sauce-deviser for thy days of fish,

A dish-designer, and most amorous
Of good old red sound liberal Gascon wine.
Will not thy body rebel, man, if thou flatter it?

Becket. That palate is insane which cannot tell
A good dish from a bad, new wine from old.

Henry. Well, who loves wine loves woman.

Becket. So I do.
Men are God's trees, and women are God's flowers;
And when the Gascon wine mounts to my head,
The trees are all the statelier, and the flowers
Are all the fairer.

Henry. And thy thoughts, thy fancies?

Becket. Good dogs, my liege, well train'd, and easily call'd
Off from the game.

Henry. Save for some once or twice,
When they ran down the game and worried it.

Becket. No, my liege, no! — not once — in God's name, no!

Henry. Nay, then, I take thee at thy word — believe thee
The veriest Galahad of old Arthur's hall.
And so this Rosamund, my true heart-wife,
Not Eleanor — she whom I love indeed
As a woman should be loved — Why dost thou smile
So dolorously?

Becket. My good liege, if a man

Wastes himself among women, how should he love
A woman as a woman should be loved?

Henry. How shouldst thou know that never hast
loved one?

Come, I would give her to thy care in England
When I am out in Normandy or Anjou.

Becket. My lord, I am your subject, not your —

Henry. Pander.

God's eyes! I know all that — not my purveyor
Of pleasures, but to save a life — her life;
Ay, and the soul of Eleanor from hell-fire.
I have built a secret bower in England, Thomas,
A nest in a bush.

Becket. And where, my liege?

Henry (*whispers*). Thine ear.

Becket. That 's lone enough.

Henry (*laying paper on table*). This chart here
mark'd '*Her Bower*,'

Take, keep it, friend. See, first, a circling wood,
A hundred pathways running everyway,
And then a brook, a bridge; and after that
This labyrinthine brickwork maze in maze,
And then another wood, and in the midst
A garden and my Rosamund. Look, this line —
The rest you see is color'd green — but this
Draws thro' the chart to her.

Becket. This blood-red line?

Henry. Ay! blood, perchance, except thou see
to her.

Becket. And where is she? There in her English nest?

Henry. Would God she were! — no, here within the city.

We take her from her secret bower in Anjou
And pass her to her secret bower in England.
She is ignorant of all but that I love her.

Becket. My liege, I pray thee let me hence; a widow
And orphan child, whom one of thy wild barons —

Henry. Ay, ay, but swear to see to her in England.

Becket. Well, well, I swear, but not to please myself.

Henry. Whatever come between us?

Becket. What should come
Between us, Henry?

Henry. Nay — I know not, Thomas.

Becket. What need then? Well — whatever come between us. [*Going.*

Henry. A moment! thou didst help me to my throne
In Theobald's time, and after by thy wisdom
Hast kept it firm from shaking; but now I,
For my realm's sake, myself must be the wizard
To raise that tempest which will set it trembling
Only to base it deeper. I, true son
Of Holy Church — no croucher to the Gregories
That tread the kings their children underheel —

Must curb her; and the Holy Father, while
This Barbarossa butts him from his chair,
Will need my help — be facile to my hands.
Now is my time. Yet — lest there should be flashes
And fulminations from the side of Rome,
An interdict on England — I will have
My young son Henry crown'd the King of England
That so the Papal bolt may pass by England,
As seeming his, not mine, and fall abroad.
I 'll have it done — and now.

Becket. Surely too young
Even for this shadow of a crown; and tho'
I love him heartily, I can spy already
A strain of hard and headstrong in him. Say,
The Queen should play his kingship against thine!

Henry. I will not think so, Thomas. Who shall crown him?
Canterbury is dying.

Becket. The next Canterbury.

Henry. And who shall he be, my friend Thomas? Who?

Becket. Name him; the Holy Father will confirm him.

Henry (*lays his hand on* Becket's *shoulder*). Here!

Becket. Mock me not. I am not even a monk.
Thy jest — no more. Why — look — is this a sleeve
For an archbishop?

Henry. But the arm within
Is Becket's, who hath beaten down my foes.
Becket. A soldier's, not a spiritual arm.
Henry. I lack a spiritual soldier, Thomas —
A man of this world and the next to boot.
Becket. There 's Gilbert Foliot.
Henry. He ! too thin, too thin.
Thou art the man to fill out the Church robe;
Your Foliot fasts and fawns too much for me.
Becket. Roger of York.
Henry. Roger is Roger of York;
King, Church, and State to him but foils wherein
To set that precious jewel, Roger of York.
No.
Becket. Henry of Winchester ?
Henry. Him who crown'd Stephen —
King Stephen's brother ! No; too royal for me.
And I 'll have no more Anselms.
Becket. Sire, the business
Of thy whole kingdom waits me; let me go.
Henry. Answer me first.
Becket. Then for thy barren jest
Take thou mine answer in bare commonplace —
Nolo episcopari.
Henry. Ay, but *Nolo*
Archiepiscopari, my good friend,
Is quite another matter.
Becket. A more awful one.

Make *me* archbishop! Why, my liege, I know
Some three or four poor priests a thousand times
Fitter for this grand function. *Me* archbishop!
God's favor and king's favor might so clash
That thou and I — That were a jest indeed!

Henry. Thou angerest me, man; I do not jest.

Enter ELEANOR *and* SIR REGINALD FITZURSE

ELEANOR (*singing*)

Over! the sweet summer closes
The reign of the roses is done —

Henry (*to* Becket, *who is going*). Thou shalt not go. I have not ended with thee.

Eleanor (*seeing chart on table*). This chart with the red line! her bower! whose bower?

Henry. The chart is not mine, but Becket's; take it, Thomas.

Eleanor. Becket! O, — ay — and these chessmen on the floor — the king's crown broken! Becket hath beaten thee again — and thou hast kicked down the board. I know thee of old.

Henry. True enough, my mind was set upon other matters.

Eleanor. What matters? State matters? love matters?

Henry. My love for thee, and thine for me.

ELEANOR

Over ! the sweet summer closes,
The reign of the roses is done ;
Over and gone with the roses,
And over and gone with the sun.

Here; but our sun in Aquitaine lasts longer. I would I were in Aquitaine again — your North chills me.

Over ! the sweet summer closes,
And never a flower at the close ;
Over and gone with the roses,
And winter again and the snows.

That was not the way I ended it first — but unsymmetrically, preposterously, illogically, out of passion, without art, — like a song of the people. Will you have it ? The last Parthian shaft of a forlorn Cupid at the King's left breast, and all left-handedness and under-handedness.

And never a flower at the close ;
Over and gone with the roses,
Not over and gone with the rose.

True, one rose will outblossom the rest, one rose in a bower. I speak after my fancies, for I am a Troubadour, you know, and won the violet at Toulouse; but my voice is harsh here, not in tune, a nightingale out of season; for marriage, rose or no rose, has killed the golden violet.

Becket. Madam, you do ill to scorn wedded love.

Eleanor. So I do. Louis of France loved me, and I dreamed that I loved Louis of France: and I loved Henry of England, and Henry of England dreamed that he loved me; but the marriage-garland withers even with the putting on, the bright link rusts with the breath of the first after-marriage kiss, the harvest moon is the ripening of the harvest, and the honey-moon is the gall of Love; he dies of his honey-moon. I could pity this poor world myself that it is no better ordered.

Henry. Dead is he, my Queen? What, altogether? Let me swear nay to that by this cross on thy neck. God's eyes! what a lovely cross! what jewels!

Eleanor. Doth it please you? Take it and wear it on that hard heart of yours — there.

[*Gives it to him.*

Henry (*puts it on*). On this left breast before so hard a heart,
To hide the scar left by thy Parthian dart.

Eleanor. Has my simple song set you jingling? Nay, if I took and translated that hard heart into our Provençal facilities, I could so play about it with the rhyme —

Henry. That the heart were lost in the rhyme, and the matter in the metre. May we not pray you, madam, to spare us the hardness of your facility?

Eleanor. The wells of Castaly are not wasted upon the desert. We did but jest.

Henry. There 's no jest on the brows of Herbert there. What is it, Herbert ?

Enter HERBERT OF BOSHAM

Herbert. My liege, the good archbishop is no more.

Henry. Peace to his soul !

Herbert. I left him with peace on his face, — that sweet other-world smile, which will be reflected in the spiritual body among the angels. But he longed much to see your Grace and the Chancellor ere he past, and his last words were a commendation of Thomas Becket to your Grace as his successor in the archbishopric.

Henry. Ha, Becket ! thou rememberest our talk !

Becket. My heart is full of tears — I have no answer.

Henry. Well, well, old men must die, or the world would grow mouldy, would only breed the past again. Come to me to-morrow. Thou hast but to hold out thy hand. Meanwhile the revenues are mine. A-hawking, a-hawking ! If I sit, I grow fat. [*Leaps over the table, and exit.*

Becket. He did prefer me to the chancellorship,
Believing I should ever aid the Church —
But have I done it ? He commends me now
From out his grave to this archbishopric.

Herbert. A dead man's dying wish should be of weight.

Becket. *His* should. Come with me. Let me learn at full
The manner of his death, and all he said.

[*Exeunt* Herbert *and* Becket.

Eleanor. Fitzurse, that chart with the red line — thou sawest it — her bower.

Fitzurse. Rosamund's?

Eleanor. Ay — there lies the secret of her whereabouts, and the King gave it to his Chancellor.

Fitzurse. To this son of a London merchant — how your Grace must hate him!

Eleanor. Hate him? as brave a soldier as Henry and a goodlier man: but thou — dost thou love this Chancellor, that thou hast sworn a voluntary allegiance to him?

Fitzurse. Not for my love toward him, but because he had the love of the King. How should a baron love a beggar on horseback, with the retinue of three kings behind him, out-royalling royalty? Besides, he holp the King to break down our castles, for the which I hate him.

Eleanor. For the which I honor him. Statesman, not Churchman, he. A great and sound policy that; I could embrace him for it: you could not see the King for the kinglings.

Fitzurse. Ay, but he speaks to a noble as tho' he were a churl, and to a churl as if he were a noble.

Eleanor. Pride of the plebeian!

Fitzurse. And this plebeian like to be Archbishop!

Eleanor. True, and I have an inherited loathing of these black sheep of the Papacy. Archbishop? I can see further into a man than our hot-headed Henry, and if there ever come feud between Church and Crown, and I do not then charm this secret out of our loyal Thomas, I am not Eleanor.

Fitzurse. Last night I followed a woman in the city here. Her face was veiled, but the back methought was Rosamund — his paramour, thy rival. I can feel for thee.

Eleanor. Thou feel for me! — paramour — rival! King Louis had no paramours, and I loved him none the more. Henry had many, and I loved him none the less — now neither more nor less — not at all; the cup 's empty. I would she were but his paramour, for men tire of their fancies; but I fear this one fancy hath taken root, and borne blossom too, and she, whom the King loves indeed, is a power in the State. Rival! — ay, and when the King passes, there may come a crash and embroilment as in Stephen's time; and her children — canst thou not — that secret matter which would heat the King against thee (*whispers him and he starts*). Nay, that is safe with me as with thyself; but canst thou not — thou art drowned in debt — thou shalt have our love, our silence, and our gold

— canst thou not — if thou light upon her — free me from her?

Fitzurse. Well, Madam, I have loved her in my time.

Eleanor. No, my bear, thou hast not. My Courts of Love would have held thee guiltless of love — the fine attractions and repulses, the delicacies, the subtleties.

Fitzurse. Madam, I loved according to the main purpose and intent of nature.

Eleanor. I warrant thee! thou wouldst hug thy Cupid till his ribs cracked — enough of this. Follow me this Rosamund day and night, whithersoever she goes; track her, if thou canst, even into the King's lodging, that I may (*clenches her fist*) — may at least have my cry against him and her, — and thou in thy way shouldst be jealous of the King, for thou in thy way didst once, what shall I call it, affect her thine own self.

Fitzurse. Ay, but the young colt winced and whinnied and flung up her heels; and then the King came honeying about her, and this Becket, her father's friend, like enough staved us from her.

Eleanor. Us!

Fitzurse. Yea, by the Blessed Virgin! There were more than I buzzing round the blossom — De Tracy — even that flint De Brito.

Eleanor. Carry her off among you; run in upon her and devour her, one and all of you; make her

as hateful to herself and to the King as she is to me.

Fitzurse. I and all would be glad to wreak our spite on the rose-faced minion of the King, and bring her to the level of the dust, so that the King —

Eleanor. Let her eat it like the serpent, and be driven out of her paradise.

ACT I

Scene I. — Becket's House in London

Chamber barely furnished. Becket *unrobing.* Herbert of Bosham *and* Servant

Servant. Shall I not help your lordship to your rest?

Becket. Friend, am I so much better than thyself
That thou shouldst help me? Thou art wearied out
With this day's work; get thee to thine own bed.
Leave me with Herbert, friend. [*Exit* Servant.
Help me off, Herbert, with this — and this.

Herbert. Was not the people's blessing as we passed
Heart-comfort and a balsam to thy blood?

Becket. The people know their Church a tower of strength,
A bulwark against Throne and Baronage.
Too heavy for me, this; off with it, Herbert!

Herbert. Is it so much heavier than thy Chancellor's robe?

Becket. No; but the Chancellor's and the Archbishop's
Together more than mortal man can bear.

Herbert. Not heavier than thine armor at Toulouse?

Becket. O Herbert, Herbert, in my chancellorship
I more than once have gone against the Church.

Herbert. To please the King?

Becket. Ay, and the King of kings,
Or justice; for it seem'd to me but just
The Church should pay her scutage like the lords.
But hast thou heard this cry of Gilbert Foliot
That I am not the man to be your primate,
For Henry could not work a miracle —
Make an archbishop of a soldier?

Herbert. Ay,
For Gilbert Foliot held himself the man.

Becket. Am I the man? My mother, ere she bore me,
Dream'd that twelve stars fell glittering out of heaven
Into her bosom.

Herbert. Ay, the fire, the light,
The spirit of the twelve Apostles enter'd
Into thy making.

Becket. And when I was a child,
The Virgin, in a vision of my sleep,
Gave me the golden keys of Paradise. Dream,
Or prophecy, that?

Herbert. Well, dream and prophecy both.

Becket. And when I was of Theobald's household, once —

The good old man would sometimes have his jest —
He took his mitre off, and set it on me,
And said, 'My young archbishop — thou wouldst make
A stately archbishop!' Jest or prophecy there?

Herbert. Both, Thomas, both.

Becket. Am I the man? That rang
Within my head last night, and when I slept
Methought I stood in Canterbury Minster,
And spake to the Lord God, and said, 'O Lord,
I have been a lover of wines, and delicate meats,
And secular splendors, and a favorer
Of players, and a courtier, and a feeder
Of dogs and hawks, and apes, and lions, and lynxes.
Am *I* the man?' And the Lord answer'd me,
'Thou art the man, and all the more the man.'
And then I asked again, 'O Lord my God,
Henry the King hath been my friend, my brother,
And mine uplifter in this world, and chosen me
For this thy great archbishopric, believing
That I should go against the Church with him,
And I shall go against him with the Church,
And I have said no word of this to him.
Am *I* the man?' And the Lord answer'd me,
'Thou art the man, and all the more the man.'
And thereupon, methought, He drew toward me,
And smote me down upon the minster floor.
I fell.

Herbert. God make not thee, but thy foes, fall!

Becket. I fell. Why fall? Why did He smite me? What?

Shall I fall off — to please the King once more?
Not fight — tho' somehow traitor to the King —
My truest and mine utmost for the Church?

Herbert. Thou canst not fall that way. Let traitor be;

For how have fought thine utmost for the Church,
Save from the throne of thine archbishopric?
And how been made archbishop hadst thou told him,
'I mean to fight mine utmost for the Church,
Against the King'?

Becket. But dost thou think the King
Forced mine election?

Herbert. I do think the King
Was potent in the election, and why not?
Why should not Heaven have so inspired the King?
Be comforted. Thou art the man — be thou
A mightier Anselm.

Becket. I do believe thee, then. I am the man.
And yet I seem appall'd — on such a sudden
At such an eagle-height I stand and see
The rift that runs between me and the King.
I served our Theobald well when I was with him;
I served King Henry well as Chancellor;
I am his no more, and I must serve the Church.
This Canterbury is only less than Rome,

And all my doubts I fling from me like dust,
Winnow and scatter all scruples to the wind,
And all the puissance of the warrior,
And all the wisdom of the Chancellor,
And all the heap'd experiences of life,
I cast upon the side of Canterbury —
Our holy mother Canterbury, who sits
With tatter'd robes. Laics and barons, thro'
The random gifts of careless kings, have graspt
Her livings, her advowsons, granges, farms,
And goodly acres — we will make her whole;
Not one rood lost. And for these Royal customs,
These ancient Royal customs — they *are* Royal,
Not of the Church — and let them be anathema.
And all that speak for them anathema.

Herbert. Thomas, thou art moved too much.

Becket. O Herbert, here
I gash myself asunder from the King,
Tho' leaving each, a wound; mine own, a grief
To show the scar for ever — his, a hate
Not ever to be heal'd.

Enter Rosamund de Clifford, *flying from* Sir Reginald Fitzurse. *Drops her veil*

Becket. Rosamund de Clifford!

Rosamund. Save me, father, hide me — they follow me — and I must not be known.

Becket. Pass in with Herbert there.

[*Exeunt* Rosamund *and* Herbert *by side door.*

Enter FITZURSE

Fitzurse. The archbishop!

Becket. Ay! what wouldst thou, Reginald?

Fitzurse. Why — why, my lord, I follow'd — follow'd one —

Becket. And then what follows? Let me follow thee.

Fitzurse. It much imports me I should know her name.

Becket. What her?

Fitzurse. The woman that I follow'd hither.

Becket. Perhaps it may import her all as much
Not to be known.

Fitzurse. And what care I for that?
Come, come, my lord archbishop; I saw that door
Close even now upon the woman.

Becket. Well?

Fitzurse (*making for the door*). Nay, let me pass, my lord, for I must know.

Becket. Back, man!

Fitzurse. Then tell me who and what she is.

Becket. Art thou so sure thou followedst anything?
Go home, and sleep thy wine off, for thine eyes
Glare stupid-wild with wine.

Fitzurse (*making to the door*). I must and will.
I care not for thy new archbishopric.

Becket. Back, man, I tell thee! What!
Shall I forget my new archbishopric

And smite thee with my crozier on the skull?
'Fore God, I am a mightier man than thou.

Fitzurse. It well befits thy new archbishopric
To take the vagabond woman of the street
Into thine arms!

Becket. O drunken ribaldry!
Out, beast! out, bear!

Fitzurse. I shall remember this.

Becket. Do, and begone! [*Exit* Fitzurse.

[*Going to the door, sees* De Tracy.
Tracy, what dost thou here?

De Tracy. My lord, I follow'd Reginald Fitzurse.

Becket. Follow him out!

De Tracy. I shall remember this
Discourtesy. [*Exit.*

Becket. Do. These be those baron-brutes
That havock'd all the land in Stephen's day.
Rosamund de Clifford!

Re-enter ROSAMUND *and* HERBERT

Rosamund. Here am I.

Becket. Why here?
We gave thee to the charge of John of Salisbury,
To pass thee to thy secret bower to-morrow.
Wast thou not told to keep thyself from sight?

Rosamund. Poor bird of passage! so I was; but, father,
They say that you are wise in winged things,
And know the ways of Nature. Bar the bird

From following the fled summer — a chink — he's out,
Gone! And there stole into the city a breath
Full of the meadows, and it minded me
Of the sweet woods of Clifford, and the walks
Where I could move at pleasure, and I thought
'Lo! I must out or die.'

Becket. Or out *and* die.
And what hast thou to do with this Fitzurse?

Rosamund. Nothing. He sued my hand. I shook at him.
He found me once alone. Nay — nay — I cannot
Tell you. My father drove him and his friends,
De Tracy and De Brito, from our castle.
I was but fourteen and an April then.
I heard him swear revenge.

Becket. Why will you court it
By self-exposure? flutter out at night?
Make it so hard to save a moth from the fire?

Rosamund. I have saved many of 'em. You catch 'em, so,
Softly, and fling them out to the free air.
They burn themselves *within*-door.

Becket. Our good John
Must speed you to your bower at once. The child
Is there already.

Rosamund. Yes — the child — the child —
O, rare, a whole long day of open field!

Becket. Ay, but you go disguised.

Rosamund. O, rare again!
We 'll baffle them, I warrant. What shall it be?
I 'll go as a nun.

Becket. No.

Rosamund. What, not good enough
Even to play at nun?

Becket. Dan John with a nun,
That Map and these new railers at the Church
May plaister his clean name with scurrilous rhymes!
No!
Go like a monk, cowling and clouding up
That fatal star, thy beauty, from the squint
Of lust and glare of malice. Good-night! good-night!

Rosamund. Father, I am so tender to all hardness!
Nay, father, first thy blessing.

Becket. Wedded?

Rosamund. Father!

Becket. Well, well! I ask no more. Heaven bless thee! hence!

Rosamund. O holy father, when thou seest him next,
Commend me to thy friend.

Becket. What friend?

Rosamund. The King.

Becket. Herbert, take out a score of armed men
To guard this bird of passage to her cage;

And watch Fitzurse, and if he follow thee,
Make him thy prisoner. I am Chancellor yet.
[*Exeunt* Herbert *and* Rosamund.
Poor soul! poor soul!
My friend, the King! — O thou Great Seal of England,
Given me by my dear friend, the King of England —
We long have wrought together, thou and I —
Now must I send thee as a common friend
To tell the King, my friend, I am against him.
We are friends no more; he will say that, not I.
The worldly bond between us is dissolved,
Not yet the love. Can I be under him
As Chancellor? as Archbishop over him?
Go therefore like a friend slighted by one
That hath climb'd up to nobler company.
Not slighted — all but moan'd for. Thou must go.
I have not dishonor'd thee — I trust I have not —
Not mangled justice. May the hand that next
Inherits thee be but as true to thee
As mine hath been! O, my dear friend, the King!
O brother! — I may come to martyrdom.
I am martyr in myself already — Herbert!
Herbert (*re-entering*). My lord, the town is quiet, and the moon

Divides the whole long street with light and shade.
No footfall — no Fitzurse. We have seen her home.

Becket. The hog hath tumbled himself into some corner,
Some ditch, to snore away his drunkenness
Into the sober headache, — Nature's moral
Against excess. Let the Great Seal be sent
Back to the King to-morrow.

Herbert. Must that be?
The King may rend the bearer limb from limb.
Think on it again.

Becket. Against the moral excess
No physical ache, but failure it may be
Of all we aim'd at. John of Salisbury
Hath often laid a cold hand on my heats,
And Herbert hath rebuked me even now.
I will be wise and wary, not the soldier
As Foliot swears it. — John, and out of breath!

Enter John of Salisbury

John of Salisbury. Thomas, thou wast not happy taking charge
Of this wild Rosamund to please the King,
Nor am I happy having charge of her —
The included Danaë has escaped again
Her tower and her Acrisius — where to seek?
I have been about the city.

Becket. Thou wilt find her

Back in her lodging. Go with her — at once —
To-night — my men will guard you to the gates.
Be sweet to her, she has many enemies.
Send the Great Seal by daybreak. Both, good-night!

Scene II

Street in Northampton leading to the Castle

Eleanor's Retainers *and* Becket's Retainers *fighting. Enter* Eleanor *and* Becket *from opposite streets*

Eleanor. Peace, fools!

Becket. Peace, friends! what idle brawl is this?

Retainer of Becket. They said — her Grace's people — thou wast found —
Liars! I shame to quote 'em — caught, my lord,
With a wanton in thy lodging — Hell requite 'em!

Retainer of Eleanor. My liege, the Lord Fitzurse reported this
In passing to the Castle even now.

Retainer of Becket. And then they mock'd us and we fell upon 'em,
For we would live and die for thee, my lord,
However kings and queens may frown on thee.

Becket to his Retainers. Go, go — no more of this!

Eleanor to her Retainers. Away! — (*Exeunt* Retainers.) Fitzurse —

Becket. Nay, let him be.

Eleanor. No, no, my lord archbishop,
'T is known you are midwinter to all women,
But often in your chancellorship you served
The follies of the King.

Becket. No, not these follies!

Eleanor. My lord, Fitzurse beheld her in your lodging.

Becket. Whom?

Eleanor. Well — you know — the minion, Rosamund.

Becket. He had good eyes!

Eleanor. Then hidden in the street
He watch'd her pass with John of Salisbury,
And heard her cry, 'Where is this bower of mine?'

Becket. Good ears too!

Eleanor. You are going to the Castle,
Will you subscribe the customs?

Becket. I leave that,
Knowing how much you reverence Holy Church,
My liege, to your conjecture.

Eleanor. I and mine —
And many a baron holds along with me —
Are not so much at feud with Holy Church
But we might take your side against the customs —
So that you grant me one slight favor.

Becket. What?

Eleanor. A sight of that same chart which Henry gave you
With the red line — 'her bower.'
Becket. And to what end?
Eleanor. That Church must scorn herself whose fearful priest
Sits winking at the license of a king,
Altho' we grant when kings are dangerous
The Church must play into the hands of kings;
Look! I would move this wanton from his sight
And take the Church's danger on myself.
Becket. For which she should be duly grateful.
Eleanor. True!
Tho' she that binds the bond, herself should see
That kings are faithful to their marriage vow.
Becket. Ay, madam, and queens also.
Eleanor. And queens also!
What is your drift?
Becket. My drift is to the Castle,
Where I shall meet the barons and my King. [*Exit.*

De Broc, De Tracy, De Brito, De Morville (*passing*)

Eleanor. To the Castle?
De Broc. Ay!
Eleanor. Stir up the King, the lords!
Set all on fire against him!
De Brito. Ay, good madam!
[*Exeunt.*

Eleanor. Fool! I will make thee hateful to thy King.
Churl! I will have thee frighted into France,
And I shall live to trample on thy grave.

Scene III

The Hall in Northampton Castle

On one side of the stage the doors of an inner Council-chamber, half-open. At the bottom, the great doors of the Hall. Roger Archbishop of York, Foliot Bishop of London, Hilary of Chichester, Bishop of Hereford, Richard de Hastings (*Grand Prior of Templars*), Philip de Eleemosyna (*the Pope's Almoner*), *and others.* De Broc, Fitzurse, De Brito, De Morville, De Tracy, *and other* Barons *assembled — a table before them.* John of Oxford, *President of the Council*

Enter Becket *and* Herbert of Bosham

Becket. Where is the King?

Roger of York. Gone hawking on the Nene,
His heart so gall'd with thine ingratitude,
He will not see thy face till thou hast sign'd
These ancient laws and customs of the realm.
Thy sending back the Great Seal madden'd him;
He all but pluck'd the bearer's eyes away.
Take heed lest he destroy thee utterly.

Becket. Then shalt thou step into my place and sign.

Roger of York. Didst thou not promise Henry to obey
These ancient laws and customs of the realm?

Becket. Saving the honor of my order — ay.
Customs, traditions, — clouds that come and go;
The customs of the Church are Peter's rock.

Roger of York. Saving thine order! But King Henry sware
That, saving his King's kingship, he would grant thee
The crown itself. Saving thine order, Thomas,
Is black and white at once, and comes to nought.
O bolster'd up with stubbornness and pride,
Wilt thou destroy the Church in fighting for it,
And bring us all to shame?

Becket. Roger of York,
When I and thou were youths in Theobald's house,
Twice did thy malice and thy calumnies
Exile me from the face of Theobald.
Now I am Canterbury, and thou art York.

Roger of York. And is not York the peer of Canterbury?
Did not Great Gregory bid Saint Austin here
Found two archbishoprics, London and York?

Becket. What came of that? The first archbishop fled,
And York lay barren for a hundred years.

Why, by this rule, Foliot may claim the pall
For London too.

Foliot. And with good reason too,
For London had a temple and a priest
When Canterbury hardly bore a name.

Becket. The pagan temple of a pagan Rome!
The heathen priesthood of a heathen creed!
Thou goest beyond thyself in petulancy!
Who made thee London? Who, but Canterbury?

John of Oxford. Peace, peace, my lords! these customs are no longer
As Canterbury calls them, wandering clouds,
But by the King's command are written down,
And by the King's command I, John of Oxford,
The President of this Council, read them.

Becket. Read!

John of Oxford (*reads*). 'All causes of advowsons and presentations, whether between laymen or clerics, shall be tried in the King's court.'

Becket. But that I cannot sign; for that would drag
The cleric before the civil judgment-seat,
And on a matter wholly spiritual.

John of Oxford. 'If any cleric be accused of felony, the Church shall not protect him; but he shall answer to the summons of the King's court to be tried therein.'

Becket. And that I cannot sign.
Is not the Church the visible Lord on earth?

Shall hands that do create the Lord be bound
Behind the back like laymen-criminals?
The Lord be judged again by Pilate? No!

John of Oxford. 'When a bishopric falls vacant, the King, till another be appointed, shall receive the revenues thereof.'

Becket. And that I cannot sign. Is the King's treasury
A fit place for the moneys of the Church,
That be the patrimony of the poor?

John of Oxford. 'And when the vacancy is to be filled up, the King shall summon the chapter of that church to court, and the election shall be made in the Chapel Royal, with the consent of our lord the King, and by the advice of his Government.'

Becket. And that I cannot sign; for that would make
Our island-Church a schism from Christendom,
And weight down all free choice beneath the throne.

Foliot. And was thine own election so canonical,
Good father?

Becket. If it were not, Gilbert Foliot,
I mean to cross the sea to France, and lay
My crozier in the Holy Father's hands,
And bid him re-create me, Gilbert Foliot.

Foliot. Nay; by another of these customs thou
Wilt not be suffer'd so to cross the seas
Without the license of our lord the King.

Becket. That, too, I cannot sign.

De Broc, De Brito, De Tracy, Fitzurse, De Morville, *start up — a clash of swords*

Sign and obey!

Becket. My lords, is this a combat or a council?
Are ye my masters, or my lord the King?
Ye make this clashing for no love o' the customs
Or constitutions, or whate'er ye call them,
But that there be among you those that hold
Lands reft from Canterbury.

De Broc. And mean to keep them,
In spite of thee!

Lords (*shouting*). Sign, and obey the crown!

Becket. The crown? Shall I do less for Canterbury
Than Henry for the crown? King Stephen gave
Many of the crown lands to those that helpt him;
So did Matilda, the King's mother. Mark,
When Henry came into his own again,
Then he took back not only Stephen's gifts,
But his own mother's, lest the crown should be
Shorn of ancestral splendor. This did Henry.
Shall I do less for mine own Canterbury?
And thou, De Broc, that holdest Saltwood Castle —

De Broc. And mean to hold it, or —

Becket. To have my life.

De Broc. The King is quick to anger; if thou anger him,
We wait but the King's word to strike thee dead.

Becket. Strike, and I die the death of martyrdom;

Strike, and ye set these customs by my death
Ringing their own death-knell thro' all the realm.

Herbert. And I can tell you, lords, ye are all as like
To lodge a fear in Thomas Becket's heart
As find a hare's form in a lion's cave.

John of Oxford. Ay, sheathe your swords, ye will displease the King.

De Broc. Why, down then thou! but an he come to Saltwood,
By God's death, thou shalt stick him like a calf!
[*Sheathing his sword.*

Hilary. O my good lord, I do entreat thee — sign.
Save the King's honor here before his barons.
He hath sworn that thou shouldst sign, and now but shuns
The semblance of defeat; I have heard him say
He means no more; so if thou sign, my lord,
That were but as the shadow of an assent.

Becket. 'T would seem too like the substance, if I sign'd.

Philip de Eleemosyna. My lord, thine ear! I have the ear of the Pope.
As thou hast honor for the Pope our master,
Have pity on him, sorely prest upon
By the fierce Emperor and his Antipope.
Thou knowest he was forced to fly to France;
He pray'd me to pray thee to pacify

Thy King; for if thou go against thy King,
Then must he likewise go against thy King,
And then thy King might join the Antipope,
And that would shake the Papacy as it stands.
Besides, thy King swore to our cardinals
He meant no harm nor damage to the Church.
Smooth thou his pride — thy signing is but form;
Nay, and should harm come of it, it is the Pope
Will be to blame — not thou. Over and over
He told me thou shouldst pacify the King,
Lest there be battle between Heaven and Earth,
And Earth should get the better — for the time.
Cannot the Pope absolve thee if thou sign?

Becket. Have I the orders of the Holy Father?

Philip. Orders, my lord — why, no; for what am I?
The secret whisper of the Holy Father.
Thou, that hast been a statesman, couldst thou always
Blurt thy free mind to the air?

Becket. If Rome be feeble, then should I be firm.

Philip. Take it not that way — balk not the Pope's will.
When he hath shaken off the Emperor,
He heads the Church against the King with thee.

Richard de Hastings (*kneeling*). Becket, I am the oldest of the Templars;
I knew thy father; he would be mine age

Had he lived now; think of me as thy father!
Behold thy father kneeling to thee, Becket.
Submit; I promise thee on my salvation
That thou wilt hear no more o' the customs.

Becket. What!
Hath Henry told thee? hast thou talk'd with him?

Another Templar (*kneeling*). Father, I am the youngest of the Templars,
Look on me as I were thy bodily son,
For, like a son, I lift my hands to thee.

Philip. Wilt thou hold out for ever, Thomas Becket?
Dost thou not hear?

Becket (*signs*). Why — there then — there — I sign,
And swear to obey the customs.

Foliot. Is it thy will,
My lord archbishop, that we too should sign?

Becket. O, ay, by that canonical obedience
Thou still hast owed thy father, Gilbert Foliot.

Foliot. Loyally and with good faith, my lord archbishop?

Becket. O, ay, with all that loyalty and good faith
Thou still hast shown thy primate, Gilbert Foliot.
[Becket *draws apart with* Herbert.
Herbert, Herbert, have I betray'd the Church?
I 'll have the paper back — blot out my name.

Herbert. Too late, my lord: you see they are signing there.

Becket. False to myself — it is the will of God
To break me, prove me nothing of myself!
This almoner hath tasted Henry's gold.
The cardinals have finger'd Henry's gold,
And Rome is venal even to rottenness.
I see it, I see it.
I am no soldier, as he said — at least
No leader. Herbert, till I hear from the Pope
I will suspend myself from all my functions.
If fast and prayer, the lacerating scourge —

Foliot (*from the table*). My lord archbishop, thou hast yet to seal.

Becket. First, Foliot, let me see what I have sign'd. [*Goes to the table.*
What, this! and this! — what! new and old together!
Seal? If a seraph shouted from the sun,
And bade me seal against the rights of the Church,
I would anathematize him. I will not seal.
[*Exit with* Herbert.

Enter King Henry

Henry. Where 's Thomas? hath he sign'd? show me the papers!
Sign'd and not seal'd! How 's that?

John of Oxford. He would not seal.
And when he sign'd, his face was stormy-red —
Shame, wrath, I know not what. He sat down there

And dropt it in his hands, and then a paleness,
Like the wan twilight after sunset, crept
Up even to the tonsure, and he groan'd,
'False to myself! It is the will of God!'

Henry. God's will be what it will, the man shall seal,
Or I will seal his doom. My burgher's son —
Nay, if I cannot break him as the prelate,
I 'll crush him as the subject. Send for him back.
[*Sits on his throne.*
Barons and bishops of our realm of England,
After the nineteen winters of King Stephen —
A reign which was no reign, when none could sit
By his own hearth in peace; when murder common
As nature's death, like Egypt's plague, had fill'd
All things with blood; when every doorway blush'd,
Dash'd red with that unhallow'd passover;
When every baron ground his blade in blood;
The household dough was kneaded up with blood;
The mill-wheel turn'd in blood; the wholesome plow
Lay rusting in the furrow's yellow weeds,
Till famine dwarft the race — I came, your King!
Nor dwelt alone, like a soft lord of the East,
In mine own hall, and sucking thro' fools' ears
The flatteries of corruption — went abroad
Thro' all my counties, spied my people's ways;

Yea, heard the churl against the baron — yea,
And did him justice; sat in mine own courts
Judging my judges, that had found a King
Who ranged confusions, made the twilight day,
And struck a shape from out the vague, and law
From madness. And the event — our fallows till'd,
Much corn, repeopled towns, a realm again.
So far my course, albeit not glassy-smooth,
Had prosper'd in the main, but suddenly
Jarr'd on this rock. A cleric violated
The daughter of his host, and murder'd him.
Bishops — York, London, Chichester, Westminster —
Ye haled this tonsured devil into your courts;
But since your canon will not let you take
Life for a life, ye but degraded him
Where I had hang'd him. What doth hard murder care
For degradation? and that made me muse,
Being bounden by my coronation oath
To do men justice. Look to it, your own selves!
Say that a cleric murder'd an archbishop,
What could ye do? Degrade, imprison him —
Not death for death.

John of Oxford. But I, my liege, could swear,
To death for death.

Henry. And, looking thro' my reign,
I found a hundred ghastly murders done

By men, the scum and offal of the Church;
Then, glancing thro' the story of this realm,
I came on certain wholesome usages,
Lost in desuetude, of my grandsire's day,
Good royal customs — had them written fair
For John of Oxford here to read to you.

John of Oxford. And I can easily swear to these as being
The King's will and God's will and justice; yet
I could but read a part to-day, because —

Fitzurse. Because my lord of Canterbury —

De Tracy. Ay,
This lord of Canterbury —

De Brito. As is his wont
Too much of late whene'er your royal rights
Are mooted in our councils —

Fitzurse. — made an uproar.

Henry. And Becket had my bosom on all this;
If ever man by bonds of gratefulness —
I raised him from the puddle of the gutter,
I made him porcelain from the clay of the city —
Thought that I knew him, err'd thro' love of him,
Hoped, were he chosen archbishop, Church and Crown,
Two sisters gliding in an equal dance,
Two rivers gently flowing side by side —
But no!
The bird that moults sings the same song again,

The snake that sloughs comes out a snake again.
Snake — ay, but he that lookt a fangless one
Issues a venomous adder.
For he, when having dofft the Chancellor's robe —
Flung the Great Seal of England in my face —
Claim'd some of our crown lands for Canterbury —
My comrade, boon companion, my co-reveller,
The master of his master, the King's king. —
God's eyes! I had meant to make him all but king.
Chancellor-Archbishop, he might well have sway'd
All England under Henry, the young King,
When I was hence. What did the traitor say?
False to himself, but ten-fold false to me!
The will of God — why, then it is my will —
Is he coming?

Messenger (*entering*). With a crowd of worshippers,
And holds his cross before him thro' the crowd,
As one that puts himself in sanctuary.

Henry. His cross!

Roger of York. His cross! I'll front him, cross to cross. [*Exit* Roger of York.

Henry. His cross! it is the traitor that imputes
Treachery to his King!
It is not safe for me to look upon him.
Away — with me!

[*Goes in with his* Barons *to the Council-Chamber, the door of which is left open.*

Enter BECKET, *holding his cross of silver before him. The* BISHOPS *come round him*

Hereford. The King will not abide thee with thy cross.
Permit me, my good lord, to bear it for thee,
Being thy chaplain.

Becket. No; it must protect me.

Herbert. As once he bore the standard of the Angles,
So now he bears the standard of the angels.

Foliot. I am the dean of the province; let me bear it.
Make not thy King a traitorous murderer.

Becket. Did not your barons draw their swords against me?

Enter ROGER OF YORK, *with his cross, advancing to* BECKET

Becket. Wherefore dost thou presume to bear thy cross,
Against the solemn ordinance from Rome,
Out of thy province?

Roger of York. Why dost thou presume,
Arm'd with thy cross, to come before the King?
If Canterbury bring his cross to court,
Let York bear his to mate with Canterbury.

Foliot (*seizing hold of* Becket's *cross*). Nay, nay, my lord, thou must not brave the King.
Nay, let me have it. I will have it!

Becket. Away!
[*Flinging him off.*

Foliot. *He* fasts, they say, this mitred Hercules!
He fast! is that an arm of fast? My lord,
Hadst thou not sign'd, I had gone along with thee;
But thou the shepherd hast betray'd the sheep,
And thou art perjured, and thou wilt not seal.
As Chancellor thou wast against the Church,
Now as archbishop goest against the King;
For, like a fool, thou know'st no middle way.
Ay, ay! but art thou stronger than the King?

Becket. Strong — not in mine own self, but Heaven; true
To either function, holding it; and thou
Fast, scourge thyself, and mortify thy flesh,
Not spirit — thou remainest Gilbert Foliot,
A worldly follower of the worldly strong.
I, bearing this great ensign, make it clear
Under what prince I fight.

Foliot. My lord of York,
Let us go in to the Council, where our bishops
And our great lords will sit in judgment on him.

Becket. Sons sit in judgment on their father! — then
The spire of Holy Church may prick the graves —
Her crypt among the stars. Sign? seal? I promised
The King to obey these customs, not yet written,

Saving mine order; true, too, that when written
I sign'd them — being a fool, as Foliot call'd me.
I hold not by my signing. Get ye hence,
Tell what I say to the King.

[*Exeunt* Hereford, Foliot, *and other* Bishops.

Roger of York. The Church will hate thee.

[*Exit.*

Becket. Serve my best friend and make him my worst foe;
Fight for the Church, and set the Church against me!

Herbert. To be honest is to set all knaves against thee.
Ah, Thomas, excommunicate them all!

Hereford (*re-entering*). I cannot brook the turmoil thou hast raised.
I would, my lord Thomas of Canterbury,
Thou wert plain Thomas and not Canterbury,
Or that thou wouldst deliver Canterbury
To our King's hands again, and be at peace.

Hilary (*re-entering*). For hath not thine ambition set the Church
This day between the hammer and the anvil —
Fealty to the King, obedience to thyself?

Herbert. What say the bishops?

Hilary. Some have pleaded for him,
But the King rages — most are with the King;
And some are reeds, that one time sway to the current,

And to the wind another. But we hold
Thou art forsworn; and no forsworn archbishop
Shall helm the Church. We therefore place ourselves
Under the shield and safeguard of the Pope,
And cite thee to appear before the Pope,
And answer thine accusers. — Art thou deaf?

Becket. I hear you. [*Clash of arms.*

Hilary. Dost thou hear those others?

Becket. Ay!

Roger of York (*re-entering*). The King's 'God's eyes!' come now so thick and fast
We fear that he may reave thee of thine own.
Come on, come on! it is not fit for us
To see the proud archbishop mutilated.
Say that he blind thee and tear out thy tongue.

Becket. So be it. He begins at top with me;
They crucified Saint Peter downward.

Roger of York. Nay,
But for their sake who stagger betwixt thine
Appeal and Henry's anger, yield.

Becket. Hence, Satan!

[*Exit* Roger of York.

Fitzurse (*re-entering*). My lord, the King demands three hundred marks,
Due from his castle of Berkhamstead and Eye
When thou thereof wast warden!

Becket. Tell the King
I spent thrice that in fortifying his castles.

De Tracy (*re-entering*). My lord, the King demands seven hundred marks,
Lent at the siege of Toulouse by the King.

Becket. I led seven hundred knights and fought his wars.

De Brito (*re-entering*). My lord, the King demands five hundred marks,
Advanced thee at his instance by the Jews,
For which the King was bound security.

Becket. I thought it was a gift; I thought it was a gift.

Enter LORD LEICESTER (*followed by* BARONS *and* BISHOPS)

Leicester. My lord, I come unwillingly. The King
Demands a strict account of all those revenues
From all the vacant sees and abbacies,
Which came into thy hands when Chancellor.

Becket. How much might that amount to, my lord Leicester?

Leicester. Some thirty — forty thousand silver marks.

Becket. Are these your customs? O my good lord Leicester,
The King and I were brothers. All I had
I lavish'd for the glory of the King;
I shone from him, for him, his glory, his
Reflection. Now the glory of the Church
Hath swallow'd up the glory of the King;

I am no more, but hers. Grant me one day
To ponder these demands.

Leicester. Hear first thy sentence!
The King and all his lords —

Becket. Son, first hear *me!*

Leicester. Nay, nay, canst thou, that holdest thine estates
In fee and barony of the King, decline
The judgment of the King?

Becket. The King! I hold
Nothing in fee and barony of the King.
Whatever the Church owns — she holds it in
Free and perpetual alms, unsubject to
One earthly sceptre.

Leicester. Nay, but hear thy judgment.
The King and all his barons —

Becket. Judgment! Barons!
Who but the bridegroom dares to judge the bride,
Or he the bridegroom may appoint? Not he
That is not of the house, but from the street
Stain'd with the mire thereof.
I had been so true
To Henry and mine office that the King
Would throne me in the great archbishopric;
And I, that knew mine own infirmity
For the King's pleasure rather than God's cause
Took it upon me — err'd thro' love of him.
Now therefore God from me withdraws Himself,
And the King too.

What! forty thousand marks!
Why, thou, the King, the Pope, the Saints, the world,
Know that when made archbishop I was freed,
Before the Prince and chief justiciary,
From every bond and debt and obligation
Incurr'd as Chancellor.
Hear me, son. As gold
Outvalues dross, light darkness, Abel Cain,
The soul the body, and the Church the Throne,
I charge thee, upon pain of mine anathema,
That thou obey, not me, but God in me,
Rather than Henry. I refuse to stand
By the King's censure, make my cry to the Pope,
By whom I will be judged; refer myself,
The King, these customs, all the Church, to him,
And under his authority — I depart. [*Going.*
[Leicester *looks at him doubtingly.*
Am I a prisoner?

Leicester. By Saint Lazarus, no!
I am confounded by thee. Go in peace.

De Broc. In peace now — but after. Take that for earnest.

[*Flings a bone at him from the rushes.*

De Brito, Fitzurse, De Tracy, and Others (*flinging wisps of rushes*). Ay, go in peace, caitiff, caitiff! And that too, perjured prelate — and that, turncoat shaveling! There, there, there! traitor, traitor, traitor!

Becket. Mannerless wolves!

[*Turning and facing them.*

Herbert. Enough, my lord, enough!

Becket. Barons of England and of Normandy,
When what ye shake at doth but seem to fly,
True test of coward, ye follow with a yell.
But I that threw the mightiest knight of France,
Sir Engelram de Trie, —

Herbert. Enough, my lord.

Becket. More than enough. I play the fool again.

Enter HERALD

Herald. The King commands you, upon pain of death,
That none should wrong or injure your archbishop.

Foliot. Deal gently with the young man Absalom.

[*Great doors of the Hall at the back open, and discover a crowd. They shout:*

Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord!

SCENE IV

REFECTORY OF THE MONASTERY AT NORTHAMPTON

A Banquet on the Tables

Enter BECKET. BECKET'S RETAINERS.

First Retainer. Do thou speak first.

Second Retainer. Nay, thou! Nay, thou! Hast not thou drawn the short straw?

First Retainer. My lord archbishop, wilt thou permit us —

Becket. To speak without stammering and like a free man? Ay.

First Retainer. My lord, permit us then to leave thy service.

Becket. When?

First Retainer. Now.

Becket. To-night?

First Retainer. To-night, my lord.

Becket. And why?

First Retainer. My lord, we leave thee not without tears.

Becket. Tears? Why not stay with me then?

First Retainer. My lord, we cannot yield thee an answer altogether to thy satisfaction.

Becket. I warrant you, or your own either. Shall I find you one? The King hath frowned upon me.

First Retainer. That is not altogether our answer, my lord.

Becket. No; yet all but all. Go, go! Ye have eaten of my dish and drunken of my cup for a dozen years.

First Retainer. And so we have. We mean thee no wrong. Wilt thou not say, 'God bless you,' ere we go?

Becket. God bless you all! God redden your pale blood! But mine is human-red; and when

ye shall hear it is poured out upon earth, and see it mounting to heaven, my 'God bless you,' that seems sweet to you now, will blast and blind you like a curse.

First Retainer. We hope not, my lord. Our humblest thanks for your blessing. Farewell!

[*Exeunt* Retainers.

Becket. Farewell, friends! farewell, swallows! I wrong the bird; she leaves only the nest she built, they leave the builder. Why? Am I to be murdered to-night? [*Knocking at the door.*

Attendant. Here is a missive left at the gate by one from the castle.

Becket. Cornwall's hand or Leicester's; they write marvellously alike. [*Reading.*

'Fly at once to France, to King Louis of France; there be those about our King who would have thy blood.'

Was not my lord of Leicester bidden to our supper?

Attendant. Ay, my lord, and divers other earls and barons. But the hour is past, and our brother, Master Cook, he makes moan that all be a-getting cold.

Becket. And I make my moan along with him. Cold after warm, winter after summer, and the golden leaves, these earls and barons, that clung to me, frosted off me by the first cold frown of

the King. Cold, but look how the table steams, like a heathen altar; nay, like the altar at Jerusalem. Shall God's good gifts be wasted? None of them here! Call in the poor from the streets, and let them feast.

Herbert. That is the parable of our blessed Lord.

Becket. And why should not the parable of our blessed Lord be acted again? Call in the poor! The Church is ever at variance with the kings, and ever at one with the poor. I marked a group of lazars in the marketplace — half-rag, half-sore — beggars, poor rogues (Heaven bless 'em!) who never saw nor dreamed of such a banquet. I will amaze them. Call them in, I say. They shall henceforward be my earls and barons — our lords and masters in Christ Jesus. [*Exit* Herbert.

If the King hold his purpose, I am myself a beggar. Forty thousand marks! forty thousand devils — and these craven bishops!

A Poor Man (entering) with his dog. My lord archbishop, may I come in with my poor friend, my dog? The King's verdurer caught him a-hunting in the forest, and cut off his paws. The dog followed his calling, my lord. I ha' carried him ever so many miles in my arms and he licks my face and moans and cries out against the King.

Becket. Better thy dog than thee. The King's courts would use thee worse than thy dog — they are too bloody. Were the Church king, it would

be otherwise. Poor beast! poor beast! set him down. I will bind up his wounds with my napkin. Give him a bone, give him a bone! Who misuses a dog would misuse a child — they cannot speak for themselves. Past help! his paws are past help. God help him!

Enter the BEGGARS (*and seat themselves at the Tables*). BECKET *and* HERBERT *wait upon them*

First Beggar. Swine, sheep, ox — here 's a French supper! When thieves fall out, honest men —

Second Beggar. Is the archbishop a thief who gives thee thy supper?

First Beggar. Well, then, how does it go? When honest men fall out, thieves — no, it can't be that.

Second Beggar. Who stole the widow's one sitting hen o' Sunday, when she was at mass?

First Beggar. Come, come! thou hadst thy share on her. Sitting hen! Our Lord Becket 's our great sitting-hen cock, and we should n't ha' been sitting here if the barons and bishops had n't been a-sitting on the archbishop.

Becket. Ay, the princes sat in judgment against me, and the Lord hath prepared your table — *Sederunt principes, ederunt pauperes.*

A Voice. Becket, beware of the knife!

Becket. Who spoke?

Third Beggar. Nobody, my lord. What 's that, my lord?

Becket. Venison.

Third Beggar. Venison?

Becket. Buck — deer, as you call it.

Third Beggar. King's meat! By the Lord, won't we pray for your lordship!

Becket. And, my children, your prayers will do more for me in the day of peril that dawns darkly and drearily over the house of God — yea, and in the day of judgment also, than the swords of the craven sycophants would have done had they remained true to me whose bread they have partaken. I must leave you to your banquet. Feed, feast, and be merry. Herbert, for the sake of the Church itself, if not for my own, I must fly to France to-night. Come with me. [*Exit with* Herbert.

Third Beggar. Here — all of you — my lord's health! (*they drink*). Well — if that is n't goodly wine —

First Beggar. Then there is n't a goodly wench to serve him with it; they were fighting for her to-day in the street.

Third Beggar. Peace!

FIRST BEGGAR

The black sheep baaed to the miller's ewe-lamb,
'The miller 's away for to-night.'
'Black sheep,' quoth she, 'too black a sin for me.'

And what said the black sheep, my masters?

'We can make a black sin white.'

Third Beggar. Peace!

FIRST BEGGAR

'Ewe-lamb, ewe-lamb, I am here by the dam.'
But the miller came home that night,
And so dusted his back with the meal in his sack,
That he made the black sheep white.

Third Beggar. Be we not of the family? be we not a-supping with the head of the family? be we not in my lord's own refractory? Out from among us; thou art our black sheep.

Enter the four KNIGHTS

Fitzurse. Sheep, said he? And sheep without the shepherd, too. Where is my lord archbishop? Thou the lustiest and lousiest of this Cain's brotherhood, answer.

Third Beggar. With Cain's answer, my lord. Am I his keeper? Thou shouldst call him Cain, not me.

Fitzurse. So I do, for he would murder his brother the State.

Third Beggar (*rising and advancing*). No, my lord; but because the Lord hath set his mark upon him that no man should murder him.

Fitzurse. Where is he? where is he?

Third Beggar. With Cain belike, in the land of Nod, or in the land of France for aught I know.

Fitzurse. France! Ha! De Morville, Tracy, Brito — fled is he? Cross swords, all of you! swear to follow him! Remember the Queen!

[*The four* Knights *cross their swords.*

De Brito. They mock us; he is here.

[*All the* Beggars *rise and advance upon them.*

Fitzurse. Come, you filthy knaves, let us pass.

Third Beggar. Nay, my lord, let *us* pass. We be a-going home after our supper in all humbleness, my lord; for the archbishop loves humbleness, my lord, and though we be fifty to four, we dare n't fight you with our crutches, my lord. There now, if thou hast not laid hands upon me! and my fellows know that I am all one scale like a fish. I pray God I have n't given thee my leprosy, my lord.

[Fitzurse *shrinks from him, and another presses upon* De Brito.

De Brito. Away, dog!

Fourth Beggar. And I was bit by a mad dog o' Friday, an' I be half dog already by this token, that tho' I can drink wine I cannot bide water, my lord; and I want to bite, I want to bite, and they do say the very breath catches.

De Brito. Insolent clown! Shall I smite him with the edge of the sword?

De Morville. No, nor with the flat of it either.

Smite the shepherd, and the sheep are scattered. Smite the sheep, and the shepherd will excommunicate thee.

De Brito. Yet my fingers itch to beat him into nothing.

Fifth Beggar. So do mine, my lord. I was born with it, and sulphur won't bring it out o' me. But for all that the archbishop washed my feet o' Tuesday. He likes it, my lord.

Sixth Beggar. And see here, my lord, this rag fro' the grangrene i' my leg. It 's humbling — it smells o' human natur'. Wilt thou smell it, my lord? for the archbishop likes the smell on it, my lord; for I be his lord and master i' Christ, my lord.

De Morville. Faugh! we shall all be poisoned. Let us go. [*They draw back*, Beggars *following*.

Seventh Beggar. My lord, I ha' three sisters a-dying at home o' the sweating sickness. They be dead while I be a-supping.

Eighth Beggar. And I ha' nine darters i' the spital that be dead ten times o'er i' one day wi' the putrid fever; and I bring the taint on it along wi' me, for the archbishop likes it, my lord.

[*Pressing upon the* Knights *till they disappear thro' the door.*

Third Beggar. Crutches, and itches, and leprosies, and ulcers, and gangrenes, and running sores, praise ye the Lord, for to-night ye have saved our archbishop!

First Beggar. I 'll go back again. I hain't half done yet.

Herbert of Bosham (*entering*). My friends, the archbishop bids you good-night. He hath retired to rest, and being in great jeopardy of his life, he hath made his bed between the altars, from whence he sends me to bid you this night pray for him who hath fed you in the wilderness.

Third Beggar. So we will — so we will, I warrant thee. Becket shall be king, and the Holy Father shall be king, and the world shall live by the King's venison and the bread o' the Lord, and there shall be no more poor for ever. Hurrah! Vive le Roy! That 's the English of it.

ACT II

Scene I. — Rosamund's Bower

A Garden of Flowers. In the midst a bank of wild-flowers with a bench before it

Voices *heard singing among the trees*

Duet.

1. Is it the wind of the dawn that I hear in the pine overhead?
2. No; but the voice of the deep as it hollows the cliffs of the land.
1. Is there a voice coming up with the voice of the deep from the strand,
   One coming up with a song in the flush of the glimmering red?
2. Love that is born of the deep coming up with the sun from the sea.
1. Love that can shape or can shatter a life till the life shall have fled?
2. Nay, let us welcome him, Love that can lift up a life from the dead.
1. Keep him away from the lone little isle. Let us be, let us be.

2. Nay, let him make it his own, let him reign in it — he, it is he,
Love that is born of the deep coming up with the sun from the sea.

Enter HENRY *and* ROSAMUND

Rosamund. Be friends with him again — I do beseech thee.

Henry. With Becket? I have but one hour with thee —
Sceptre and crosier clashing, and the mitre
Grappling the crown — and when I flee from this
For a gasp of freer air, a breathing-while
To rest upon thy bosom and forget him —
Why thou, my bird, thou pipest 'Becket, Becket' —
Yea, thou my golden dream of Love's own bower,
Must be the nightmare breaking on my peace
With 'Becket.'

Rosamund. O my life's life, not to smile
Is all but death to me. My sun, no cloud!
Let there not be one frown in this one hour.
Out of the many thine, let this be mine!
Look rather thou all-royal as when first
I met thee.

Henry. Where was that?

Rosamund. Forgetting that
Forgets me too.

Henry. Nay, I remember it well.
There on the moors.

Rosamund. And in a narrow path.
A plover flew before thee. Then I saw
Thy high black steed among the flaming furze,
Like sudden night in the main glare of day.
And from that height something was said to me,
I knew not what.

Henry. I ask'd the way.

Rosamund. I think so.
So I lost mine.

Henry. Thou wast too shamed to answer.

Rosamund. Too scared — so young!

Henry. The rosebud of my rose! —
Well, well, no more of *him* — I have sent his folk,
His kin, all his belongings, over-seas;
Age, orphans, and babe-breasting mothers — all
By hundreds to him — there to beg, starve, die —
So that the fool King Louis feed them not.
The man shall feel that I can strike him yet.

Rosamund. Babes, orphans, mothers! is that royal, sire?

Henry. And I have been as royal with the Church.
He shelter'd in the Abbey of Pontigny,
There wore his time studying the canon law
To work it against me. But since he cursed
My friends at Veselay, I have let them know
That if they keep him longer as their guest,
I scatter all their cowls to all the hells.

Rosamund. And is that altogether royal?

Henry. Traitress!

Rosamund. A faithful traitress to thy royal fame.

Henry. Fame! what care I for fame? Spite, ignorance, envy,
Yea, honesty too, paint her what way they will,
Fame of to-day is infamy to-morrow;
Infamy of to-day is fame to-morrow;
And round and round again. What matters? Royal —
I mean to leave the royalty of my crown
Unlessen'd to mine heirs.

Rosamund. Still — thy fame too;
I say that should be royal.

Henry. And I say,
I care not for thy saying.

Rosamund. And I say,
I care not for *thy* saying. A greater King
Than thou art, Love, who cares not for the word,
Makes 'care not' — care. There have I spoken true?

Henry. Care dwell with me for ever when I cease
To care for thee as ever!

Rosamund. No need! no need! . . .
There is a bench. Come, wilt thou sit? — My bank
Of wild-flowers [*he sits*]. At thy feet!
[*She sits at his feet.*

Henry. I bade them clear
A royal pleasaunce for thee, in the wood,
Not leave these country-folk at court.

Rosamund. I brought them
In from the wood, and set them here. I love them
More than the garden flowers, that seem at most
Sweet guests, or foreign cousins, not half speaking
The language of the land. I love *them* too,
Yes. But, my liege, I am sure, of all the roses —
Shame fall on those who gave it a dog's name! —
This wild one (*picking a briar-rose*) — nay, I shall
not prick myself —
Is sweetest. Do but smell!

Henry. Thou rose of the world!
Thou rose of all the roses! [*Muttering.*
I am not worthy of her — this beast-body
That God has plunged my soul in — I, that taking
The Fiend's advantage of a throne, so long
Have wander'd among women, — a foul stream
Thro' fever-breeding levels, — at her side,
Among these happy dales, run clearer, drop
The mud I carried, like yon brook, and glass
The faithful face of heaven —
[*Looking at her, and unconsciously aloud,*
— thine! thine!

Rosamund. I know it.

Henry (*muttering*). Not hers. We have but one bond, her hate of Becket.

Rosamund (*half hearing*). Nay! nay! what art thou muttering? *I* hate Becket?

Henry (*muttering*). A sane and natural loathing for a soul

Purer, and truer and nobler than herself;
And mine a bitterer illegitimate hate,
A bastard hate born of a former love.

Rosamund. My fault to name him! O, let the hand of one
To whom thy voice is all her music stay it
But for a breath! [*Puts her hand before his lips.*
Speak only of thy love.
Why, there — like some loud beggar at thy gate —
The happy boldness of this hand hath won it
Love's alms, thy kiss (*looking at her hand*) — Sacred!
I'll kiss it too. [*Kissing it.*
There! wherefore dost thou so peruse it? Nay,
There may be crosses in my line of life.

Henry. Not half *her* hand — no hand to mate with *her*,
If it should come to that.

Rosamund. With her? with whom?

Henry. Life on the hand is naked gipsy-stuff;
Life on the face, the brows — clear innocence!
Vein'd marble — not a furrow yet — and hers
[*Muttering.*
Crost and recrost, a venomous spider's web —

Rosamund (*springing up*). Out of the cloud, my Sun — out of the eclipse
Narrowing my golden hour!

Henry. O Rosamund,
I would be true — would tell thee all — and something

I had to say — I love thee none the less —
Which will so vex thee.

Rosamund. Something against *me?*

Henry. No, no, against myself.

Rosamund. I will not hear it.
Come, come, mine hour! I bargain for mine hour.
I'll call thee little Geoffrey.

Henry. Call him!

Rosamund. Geoffrey!

Enter GEOFFREY

Henry. How the boy grows!

Rosamund. Ay, and his brows are thine;
The mouth is only Clifford, my dear father.

Geoffrey. My liege, what hast thou brought me?

Henry. Venal imp!
What say'st thou to the Chancellorship of England?

Geoffrey. O, yes, my liege.

Henry. 'O, yes, my liege!' He speaks
As if it were a cake of gingerbread.

Dost thou know, my boy, what it is to be Chancellor of England?

Geoffrey. Something good, or thou wouldst not give it me.

Henry. It is, my boy, to side with the King when Chancellor, and then to be made archbishop and go against the King who made him, and turn the world upside down.

Geoffrey. I won't have it then. Nay, but give it me, and I promise thee not to turn the world upside down.

Henry (*giving him a ball*). Here is a ball, my boy, thy world, to turn any way and play with as thou wilt — which is more than I can do with mine. Go try it, play. [*Exit* Geoffrey.
A pretty lusty boy.

Rosamund. So like to thee;
Like to be liker.

Henry. Not in my chin, I hope!
That threatens double.

Rosamund. Thou art manlike perfect.

Henry. Ay, ay, no doubt; and were I humpt behind,
Thou 'dst say as much — the goodly way of women
Who love, for which I love them. May God grant
No ill befall or him or thee when I
Am gone!

Rosamund. Is *he* thy enemy?

Henry. He? who? ay!

Rosamund. Thine enemy knows the secret of my bower.

Henry. And I could tear him asunder with wild horses
Before he would betray it. Nay — no fear!
More like is he to excommunicate me.

Rosamund. And I would creep, crawl over knife-edge flint

Barefoot, a hundred leagues, to stay his hand
Before he flash'd the bolt.

Henry. And when he flash'd it
Shrink from me, like a daughter of the Church.

Rosamund. Ay, but he will not.

Henry. Ay! but if he did?

Rosamund. O, then! O, then! I almost fear to say
That my poor heretic heart would excommunicate
His excommunication, clinging to thee
Closer than ever.

Henry (*raising* Rosamund *and kissing her*). My brave-hearted Rose!
Hath he ever been to see thee?

Rosamund. Here? not he.
And it is so lonely here — no confessor.

Henry. Thou shalt confess all thy sweet sins to me.

Rosamund. Besides, we came away in such a heat,
I brought not even my crucifix.

Henry. Take this.

[*Giving her the Crucifix which* Eleanor *gave him.*

Rosamund. O, beautiful! May I have it as mine, till mine
Be mine again?

Henry (*throwing it round her neck*). Thine — as I am — till death!

Rosamund. Death? no! I 'll have it with me in my shroud,
And wake with it, and show it to all the Saints.

Henry. Nay — I must go; but when thou layest thy lip
To this, remembering One who died for thee,
Remember also one who lives for thee
Out there in France; for I must hence to brave
The Pope, King Louis, and this turbulent priest.

Rosamund (*kneeling*). O, by thy love for me, all mine for thee,
Fling not thy soul into the flames of hell!
I kneel to thee — be friends with him again.

Henry. Look, look! if little Geoffrey have not tost
His ball into the brook! makes after it too
To find it. Why, the child will drown himself.

Rosamund. Geoffrey! Geoffrey! [*Exeunt.*

Scene II

Montmirail

'*The Meeting of the Kings.*' John of Oxford *and* Henry. *Crowd in the distance*

John of Oxford. You have not crown'd young Henry yet, my liege?

Henry. Crown'd! by God's eyes, we will not have him crown'd.

I spoke of late to the boy, he answer'd me,
As if he wore the crown already — No,
We will not have him crown'd.
'T is true what Becket told me, that the mother
Would make him play his kingship against mine.

John of Oxford. Not have him crown'd?

Henry. Not now — not yet! and Becket —
Becket should crown him were he crown'd at all;
But, since we would be lord of our own manor,
This Canterbury, like a wounded deer,
Has fled our presence and our feeding-grounds.

John of Oxford. Cannot a smooth tongue lick him whole again
To serve your will?

Henry. He hates my will, not me.

John of Oxford. There 's York, my liege.

Henry. But England scarce would hold
Young Henry king, if only crown'd by York,
And that would stilt up York to twice himself.
There is a movement yonder in the crowd —
See if our pious — what shall I call him, John? —
Husband-in-law, our smooth-shorn suzerain,
Be yet within the field.

John of Oxford. I will. [*Exit.*

Henry. Ay! Ay!
Mince and go back! his politic Holiness
Hath all but climb'd the Roman perch again,
And we shall hear him presently with clapt wing

Crow over Barbarossa — at last tongue-free
To blast my realms with excommunication
And interdict. I must patch up a peace —
A peace in this long-tugged-at, threadbare-worn
Quarrel of Crown and Church — to rend again.
His Holiness cannot steer straight thro' shoals,
Nor I. The citizen's heir hath conquer'd me
For the moment. So we make our peace with him.

Enter Louis

Brother of France, what shall be done with Becket?

Louis. The holy Thomas! Brother, you have traffick'd
Between the Emperor and the Pope, between
The Pope and Antipope — a perilous game
For men to play with God.

Henry. Ay, ay, good brother,
They call you the Monk-King.

Louis. Who calls me? she
That was my wife, now yours? You have her Duchy,
The point you aim'd at, and pray God she prove
True wife to you. You have had the better of us
In secular matters.

Henry. Come, confess, good brother,
You did your best or worst to keep her Duchy.
Only the golden Leopard printed in it
Such hold-fast claws that you perforce again

Shrank into France. Tut, tut! did we convene
This conference but to babble of our wives?
They are plagues enough in-door.

Louis. We fought in the East,
And felt the sun of Antioch scald our mail,
And push'd our lances into Saracen hearts.
We never hounded on the State at home
To spoil the Church.

Henry. How should you see this rightly?

Louis. Well, well, no more! I am proud of my 'Monk-King,'
Whoever named me; and, brother, Holy Church
May rock, but will not wreck, nor our archbishop
Stagger on the slope decks for any rough sea
Blown by the breath of kings. We do forgive you
For aught you wrought against us.

[Henry *holds up his hand.*

Nay, I pray you,
Do not defend yourself. You will do much
To rake out all old dying heats if you,
At my requesting, will but look into
The wrongs you did him, and restore his kin,
Reseat him on his throne of Canterbury,
Be, both, the friends you were.

Henry. The friends we were!
Co-mates we were, and had our sport together.
Co-kings we were, and made the laws together.
The world had never seen the like before.
You are too cold to know the fashion of it.

Well, well, we will be gentle with him, gracious —
Most gracious.

Enter BECKET, *after him*, JOHN OF OXFORD, ROGER OF YORK, GILBERT FOLIOT, DE BROC, FITZURSE, *etc.*

Only that the rift he made
May close between us, here I am wholly king,
The word should come from him.
Becket (*kneeling*). Then, my dear liege,
I here deliver all this controversy
Into your royal hands.
Henry. Ah, Thomas, Thomas,
Thou art thyself again, Thomas again.
Becket (*rising*). Saving God's honor!
Henry. Out upon thee, man!
Saving the devil's honor, his yes and no.
Knights, bishops, earls, this London spawn — by Mahound,
I had sooner have been born a Mussulman —
Less clashing with their priests —
I am half-way down the slope — will no man stay me?
I dash myself to pieces — I stay myself —
Puff — it is gone. You, Master Becket, you
That owe to me your power over me —
Nay, nay —
Brother of France, you have taken, cherish'd him
Who thief-like fled from his own church by night,
No man pursuing. I would have had him back.

Take heed he do not turn and rend you too:
For whatsoever may displease him — that
Is clean against God's honor — a shift, a trick
Whereby to challenge, face me out of all
My regal rights. Yet, yet — that none may dream
I go against God's honor — ay, or himself
In any reason, choose
A hundred of the wisest heads from England,
A hundred, too, from Normandy and Anjou;
Let these decide on what was customary
In olden days, and all the Church of France
Decide on their decision, I am content.
More, what the mightiest and the holiest
Of all his predecessors may have done
Even to the least and meanest of my own,
Let him do the same to me — I am content.

Louis. Ay, ay! the King humbles himself enough.

Becket (*aside*). Words! he will wriggle out of them like an eel
When the time serves. (*Aloud.*) My lieges and my lords,
The thanks of Holy Church are due to those
That went before us for their work, which we
Inheriting reap an easier harvest. Yet —

Louis. My lord, will you be greater than the Saints,
More than Saint Peter? whom — what is it you doubt?
Behold your peace at hand.

Becket. I say that those
Who went before us did not wholly clear
The deadly growths of earth, which hell's own heat
So dwelt on that they rose and darken'd heaven.
Yet they did much. Would God they had torn up all
By the hard root, which shoots again; our trial
Had so been less; but, seeing they were men
Defective or excessive, must we follow
All that they overdid or underdid?
Nay, if they were defective as Saint Peter
Denying Christ, who yet defied the tyrant,
We hold by his defiance, not his defect.
O good son Louis, do not counsel me,
No, to suppress God's honor for the sake
Of any king that breathes. No, God forbid!

Henry. No! God forbid! and turn me Mussulman!
No God but one, and Mahound is his prophet.
But for your Christian, look you, you shall have
None other God but me — me, Thomas, son
Of Gilbert Becket, London merchant. Out!
I hear no more. [*Exit.*

Louis. Our brother's anger puts him,
Poor man, beside himself — not wise. My lord,
We have claspt your cause, believing that our brother
Had wrong'd you; but this day he proffer'd peace.
You will have war; and tho' we grant the Church

King over this world's kings, yet, my good lord,
We that are kings are something in this world,
And so we pray you, draw yourself from under
The wings of France. We shelter you no more.
[*Exit.*

John of Oxford. I am glad that France hath scouted him at last.
I told the Pope what manner of man he was. [*Exit.*

Roger of York. Yea, since he flouts the will of either realm,
Let either cast him away like a dead dog! [*Exit.*

Foliot. Yea, let a stranger spoil his heritage,
And let another take his bishopric! [*Exit.*

De Broc. Our castle, my lord, belongs to Canterbury.
I pray you come and take it. [*Exit.*

Fitzurse. When you will.
[*Exit.*

Becket. Cursed be John of Oxford, Roger of York,
And Gilbert Foliot! cursed those De Brocs
That hold our Saltwood Castle from our see!
Cursed Fitzurse, and all the rest of them
That sow this hate between my lord and me!

Voices from the Crowd. Blessed be the lord archbishop, who hath withstood two kings to their faces for the honor of God.

Becket. Out of the mouths of babes and sucklings, praise!

I thank you, sons; when kings but hold by crowns,
The crowd that hungers for a crown in heaven
Is my true king.

Herbert. Thy true King bade thee be
A fisher of men; thou hast them in thy net.

Becket. I am too like the King here; both of us
Too headlong for our office. Better have been
A fisherman at Bosham, my good Herbert,
Thy birthplace — the sea-creek — the petty rill
That falls into it — the green field — the gray church —
The simple lobster-basket, and the mesh —
The more or less of daily labor done —
The pretty gaping bills in the home-nest
Piping for bread — the daily want supplied —
The daily pleasure to supply it.

Herbert. Ah, Thomas,
You had not borne it, no, not for a day.

Becket. Well, maybe, no.

Herbert. But bear with Walter Map,
For here he comes to comment on the time.

Enter Walter Map

Walter Map. Pity, my lord, that you have quenched the warmth of France toward you, tho' His Holiness, after much smouldering and smoking, be kindled again upon your quarter.

Becket. Ay, if he do not end in smoke again.

Walter Map. My lord, the fire, when first kin-

dled, said to the smoke, 'Go up, my son, straight to heaven.' And the smoke said, 'I go;' but anon the Northeast took and turned him Southwest, then the Southwest turned him Northeast, and so of the other winds; but it was in him to go up straight if the time had been quieter. Your lordship affects the unwavering perpendicular; but His Holiness, pushed one way by the Empire and another by England, if he move at all — Heaven stay him! — is fain to diagonalize.

Herbert. Diagonalize! thou art a word-monger.
Our Thomas never will diagonalize.
Thou art a jester and a verse-maker.
Diagonalize!

Walter Map. Is the world any the worse for my verses if the Latin rhymes be rolled out from a full mouth? or any harm done to the people if my jest be in defence of the Truth?

Becket. Ay, if the jest be so done that the people
Delight to wallow in the grossness of it,
Till Truth herself be shamed of her defender.
Non defensoribus istis, Walter Map!

Walter Map. Is that my case? so if the city be sick, and I cannot call the kennel sweet, your lordship would suspend me from verse-writing, as you suspended yourself after sub-writing to the customs.

Becket. I pray God pardon mine infirmity!

Walter Map. Nay, my lord, take heart; for tho'

you suspended yourself, the Pope let you down again; and tho' you suspend Foliot or another, the Pope will not leave them in suspense, for the Pope himself is always in suspense, like Mahound's coffin hung between heaven and earth — always in suspense, like the scales, till the weight of Germany or the gold of England brings one of them down to the dust — always in suspense, like the tail of the horologe — to and fro — tick-tack — we make the time, we keep the time, ay, and we serve the time; for I have heard say that if you boxed the Pope's ears with a purse, you might stagger him, but he would pocket the purse. No saying of mine — Jocelyn of Salisbury. But the King hath bought half the College of Red-hats. He warmed to you to-day, and you have chilled him again. Yet you both love God. Agree with him quickly again, even for the sake of the Church. My one grain of good counsel which you will not swallow. I hate a split between old friendships as I hate the dirty gap in the face of a Cistercian monk, that will swallow anything. Farewell. [*Exit.*

Becket. Map scoffs at Rome. I all but hold
with Map.
Save for myself no Rome were left in England,
All had been his. Why should this Rome, this
Rome,
Still choose Barabbas rather than the Christ,
Absolve the left-hand thief and damn the right?

Take fees of tyranny, wink at sacrilege,
Which even Peter had not dared? condemn
The blameless exile? —
Herbert. Thee, thou holy Thomas!
I would that thou hadst been the Holy Father.
Becket. I would have done my most to keep
Rome holy,
I would have made Rome know she still is Rome —
Who stands aghast at her eternal self
And shakes at mortal kings — her vacillation,
Avarice, craft — O God, how many an innocent
Has left his bones upon the way to Rome
Unwept, uncared for! Yea — on mine own self
The King had had no power except for Rome.
'T is not the King who is guilty of mine exile,
But Rome, Rome, Rome!
Herbert. My lord, I see this Louis
Returning, ah! to drive thee from his realm.
Becket. He said as much before. Thou art no
prophet,
Nor yet a prophet's son.
Herbert. Whatever he say
Deny not thou God's honor for a king.
The King looks troubled.

Re-enter KING LOUIS

Louis. My dear lord archbishop,
I learn but now that those poor Poitevins
That in thy cause were stirr'd against King Henry

Have been, despite his kingly promise given
To our own self of pardon, evilly used
And put to pain. I have lost all trust in him.
The Church alone hath eyes — and now I see
That I was blind — suffer the phrase — surrendering
God's honor to the pleasure of a man.
Forgive me and absolve me, holy father. [*Kneels.*

Becket. Son, I absolve thee in the name of God.

Louis (*rising*). Return to Sens, where we will care for you.
The wine and wealth of all our France are yours;
Rest in our realm, and be at peace with all.
[*Exeunt.*

Voices from the Crowd. Long live the good King Louis! God bless the great archbishop!

Re-enter HENRY *and* JOHN OF OXFORD

Henry (*looking after* King Louis *and* Becket). Ay, there they go — both backs are turn'd to me —
Why, then I strike into my former path
For England, crown young Henry there, and make
Our waning Eleanor all but love me!
John,
Thou hast served me heretofore with Rome — and well.
They call thee John the Swearer.

John of Oxford. For this reason,

That, being ever duteous to the King,
I evermore have sworn upon his side,
And ever mean to do it.

Henry (*claps him on the shoulder*). Honest John!
To Rome again! the storm begins again.
Spare not thy tongue! be lavish with our coins,
Threaten our junction with the Emperor — flatter
And fright the Pope — bribe all the cardinals —
leave
Lateran and Vatican in one dust of gold —
Swear and unswear, state and misstate thy best!
I go to have young Henry crown'd by York.

ACT III

Scene I. — The Bower

Henry *and* Rosamund

Henry. All that you say is just. I cannot answer it
Till better times, when I shall put away —
Rosamund. What will you put away?
Henry. That which you ask me
Till better times. Let it content you now
There is no woman that I love so well.
Rosamund. No woman but should be content with that —
Henry. And one fair child to fondle!
Rosamund. O, yes, the child
We waited for so long — Heaven's gift at last —
And how you doted on him then! To-day
I almost fear'd your kiss was colder — yes —
But then the child *is* such a child! What chance
That he should ever spread into the man
Here in our silence? I have done my best.
I am not learn'd.
Henry. I am the King, his father,

And I will look to it. Is our secret ours?
Have you had any alarm? no stranger?

Rosamund. No.
The warder of the bower hath given himself
Of late to wine. I sometimes think he sleeps
When he should watch; and yet what fear? the people
Believe the wood enchanted. No one comes,
Nor foe nor friend; his fond excess of wine
Springs from the loneliness of my poor bower,
Which weighs even on me.

Henry. Yet these tree-towers,
Their long bird-echoing minster-aisles, — the voice
Of the perpetual brook, these golden slopes
Of Solomon-shaming flowers — that was your saying,
All pleased you so at first.

Rosamund. Not now so much.
My Anjou bower was scarce as beautiful,
But you were oftener there. I have none but you.
The brook's voice is not yours, and no flower, not
The sun himself, should he be changed to one,
Could shine away the darkness of that gap
Left by the lack of love!

Henry. The lack of love!

Rosamund. Of one we love. Nay, I would not be bold,
Yet hoped ere this you might —

[*Looks earnestly at him.*

Henry. Anything further?

Rosamund. Only my best bower-maiden died of late,
And that old priest whom John of Salisbury trusted
Hath sent another.

Henry. Secret?

Rosamund. I but asked her
One question, and she primm'd her mouth and put
Her hands together — thus — and said, God help her,
That she was sworn to silence.

Henry. What did you ask her?

Rosamund. Some daily something-nothing.

Henry. Secret then?

Rosamund. I do not love her. Must you go, my liege,
So suddenly?

Henry. I came to England suddenly,
And on a great occasion sure to wake
As great a wrath in Becket —

Rosamund. Always Becket!
He always comes between us.

Henry. And to meet it
I needs must leave as suddenly. It is raining,
Put on your hood and see me to the bounds.

[*Exeunt.*

MARGERY (*singing behind the scene*)

Babble in bower
Under the rose!

Bee must n't buzz,
  Whoop — but he knows.

Kiss me, little one,
  Nobody near !
Grasshopper, grasshopper,
  Whoop — you can hear.

Kiss in the bower
  Tit on the tree !
Bird must n't tell,
  Whoop —he can see.

Enter MARGERY

I ha' been but a week here and I ha' seen what I ha' seen, for to be sure it 's no more than a week since our old Father Philip that has confessed our mother for twenty years, and she was hard put to it, and to speak truth, nigh at the end of our last crust, and that mouldy, and she cried out on him to put me forth in the world and to make me a woman of the world, and to win my own bread, whereupon he asked our mother if I could keep a quiet tongue i' my head, and not speak till I was spoke to, and I answered for myself that I never spoke more than was needed, and he told me he would advance me to the service of a great lady, and took me ever so far away, and gave me a great pat o' the cheek for a pretty wench, and said it was a pity to blindfold such eyes as mine, and such to be sure they be, but he blinded 'em for all that,

and so brought me no-hows as I may say, and the more shame to him after his promise, into a garden and not into the world, and bade me whatever I saw not to speak one word, an' it 'ud be well for me in the end, for there were great ones who would look after me, and to be sure I ha' seen great ones to-day — and then not to speak one word, for that's the rule o' the garden, tho' to be sure if I had been Eve i' the garden I should n't ha' minded the apple, for what's an apple, you know, save to a child, and I 'm no child, but more a woman o' the world than my lady here, and I ha' seen what I ha' seen — tho' to be sure if I had n't minded it we should all on us ha' had to go, bless the Saints, wi' bare backs, but the backs 'ud ha' countenanced one another, and belike it 'ud ha' been always summer, and anyhow I am as well-shaped as my lady here, and I ha' seen what I ha' seen, and what 's the good of my talking to myself, for here comes my lady (*enter* Rosamund), and, my lady, tho' I should n't speak one word, I wish you joy o' the King's brother.

Rosamund. What is it you mean ?

Margery. I mean your goodman, your husband, my lady, for I saw your ladyship a-parting wi' him even now i' the coppice, when I was a-getting o' bluebells for your ladyship's nose to smell on — and I ha' seen the King once at Oxford, and he's as like the King as fingernail to fingernail, and I

thought at first it was the King, only you know the King 's married, for King Louis —

Rosamund. Married !

Margery. Years and years, my lady, for her husband, King Louis —

Rosamund. Hush !

Margery. And I thought if it were the King's brother he had a better bride than the King, for the people do say that his is bad beyond all reckoning, and —

Rosamund. The people lie.

Margery. Very like, my lady, but most on 'em know an honest woman and a lady when they see her, and besides they say she makes songs, and that 's against her, for I never knew an honest woman that could make songs, tho' to be sure our mother 'll sing me old songs by the hour, but then, God help her, she had 'em from her mother, and her mother from her mother back and back for ever so long, but none on 'em ever made songs, and they were all honest.

Rosamund. Go, you shall tell me of her some other time.

Margery. There 's none so much to tell on her, my lady, only she kept the seventh commandment better than some one I know on, or I could n't look your ladyship i' the face, and she brew'd the best ale in all Glo'ster, that is to say in her time when she had the 'Crown.'

Rosamund. The crown! who?

Margery. Mother.

Rosamund. I mean her whom you call — fancy — my husband's brother's wife.

Margery. O, Queen Eleanor. Yes, my lady; and tho' I be sworn not to speak a word, I can tell you all about her, if —

Rosamund. No word now. I am faint and sleepy. Leave me. Nay — go. What, will you anger me? [*Exit* Margery.

He charged me not to question any of those
About me. Have I? no! she question'd *me.*
Did she not slander *him?* Should she stay here?
May she not tempt me, being at my side,
To question *her?* Nay, can I send her hence
Without his kingly leave? I am in the dark.
I have lived, poor bird, from cage to cage, and known
Nothing but him — happy to know no more,
So that he loved me — and he loved me — yes
And bound me by his love to secrecy
Till his own time.
Eleanor, Eleanor, have I
Not heard ill things of her in France? O, she 's
The Queen of France. I see it — some confusion,
Some strange mistake. I did not hear aright,
Myself confused with parting from the King.

MARGERY (*behind scene*)

Bee must n't buzz,
Whoop — but he knows.

Rosamund. Yet her — what her? he hinted of some her —
When he was here before —
Something that would displease me. Hath he stray'd
From love's clear path into the common bush,
And, being scratch'd, returns to his true rose,
Who hath not thorn enough to prick him for it,
Even with a word?

MARGERY (*behind scene*)

Bird must n't tell,
Whoop — he can see.

Rosamund. I would not hear him. Nay — there 's more — he frown'd
'No mate for her, if it should come to that' —
To that — to what?

MARGERY (*behind scene*)

Whoop — but he knows,
Whoop — but he knows.

Rosamund. O God! some dreadful truth is breaking on me —
Some dreadful thing is coming on me.

Enter Geoffrey

Geoffrey!

Geoffrey. What are you crying for, when the sun shines?

Rosamund. Hath not thy father left us to ourselves?

Geoffrey. Ay, but he 's taken the rain with him. I hear Margery: I 'll go play with her.

[*Exit* Geoffrey.

Rosamund

Rainbow, stay,
Gleam upon gloom,
Bright as my dream,
Rainbow, stay!
But it passes away,
Gloom upon gleam,
Dark as my doom —
O rainbow, stay!

Scene II

Outside the Woods near Rosamund's Bower

Eleanor. Fitzurse

Eleanor. Up from the salt lips of the land we two
Have track'd the King to this dark inland wood;
And somewhere hereabouts he vanish'd. Here
His turtle builds; his exit is our adit.
Watch! he will out again, and presently,

Seeing he must to Westminster and crown
Young Henry there to-morrow.

Fitzurse. We have watch'd
So long in vain, he hath pass'd out again,
And on the other side. [*A great horn winded.*
Hark! Madam!

Eleanor. Ay,
How ghostly sounds that horn in the black wood!
[*A countryman flying.*
Whither away, man? what are you flying from?

Countryman. The witch! the witch! she sits naked by a great heap of gold in the middle of the wood, and when the horn sounds she comes out as a wolf. Get you hence! a man passed in there to-day. I holla'd to him, but he did n't hear me; he 'll never out again, the witch has got him. I dare n't stay — I dare n't stay!

Eleanor. Kind of the witch to give thee warning, tho'. [*Man flies.*
Is not this wood-witch of the rustic's fear
Our woodland Circe that hath witch'd the King?
[*Horn sounded. Another flying.*

Fitzurse. Again! stay, fool, and tell me why thou fliest.

Countryman. Fly thou too. The King keeps his forest head of game here, and when that horn sounds a score of wolf-dogs are let loose that will tear thee piecemeal. Linger not till the third horn. Fly! [*Exit.*

Eleanor. This is the likelier tale. We have hit the place.
Now let the King's fine game look to itself. [*Horn.*
Fitzurse. Again! —
And far on in the dark heart of the wood
I hear the yelping of the hounds of hell.
Eleanor. I have my dagger here to still their throats.
Fitzurse. Nay, madam, not to-night — the night is falling.
What can be done to-night?
Eleanor. Well — well — away.

Scene III

Traitor's Meadow at Fréteval. Pavilions and Tents of the English and French Baronage

Becket *and* Herbert of Bosham

Becket. See here!
Herbert. What 's here?
Becket. A notice from the priest
To whom our John of Salisbury committed
The secret of the bower, that our wolf-Queen
Is prowling round the fold. I should be back
In England even for this.
Herbert. These are by-things
In the great cause.

Becket. The by-things of the Lord
Are the wrong'd innocences that will cry
From all the hidden by-ways of the world
In the great day against the wronger. I know
Thy meaning. Perish she, I, all, before
The Church should suffer wrong!

Herbert. Do you see, my lord,
There is the King talking with Walter Map?

Becket. He hath the Pope's last letters, and they threaten
The immediate thunder-blast of interdict;
Yet he can scarce be touching upon those,
Or scarce would smile that fashion.

Herbert. Winter sunshine!
Beware of opening out thy bosom to it,
Lest thou, myself, and all thy flock should catch
An after ague-fit of trembling. Look!
He bows, he bares his head, he is coming hither.
Still with a smile.

Enter KING HENRY *and* WALTER MAP

Henry. We have had so many hours together, Thomas,
So many happy hours alone together,
That I would speak with you once more alone.

Becket. My liege, your will and happiness are mine. [*Exeunt* King *and* Becket.

Herbert. The same smile still.

Walter Map. Do you see that great black cloud

that hath come over the sun and cast us all into shadow?

Herbert. And feel it too.

Walter Map. And see you yon side-beam that is forced from under it, and sets the church-tower over there all a-hell-fire as it were?

Herbert. Ay.

Walter Map. It is this black, bell-silencing, anti-marrying, burial-hindering interdict that hath squeezed out this side-smile upon Canterbury, whereof may come conflagration. Were I Thomas, I would n't trust it. Sudden change is a house on sand; and tho' I count Henry honest enough, yet when fear creeps in at the front, honesty steals out at the back, and the King at last is fairly scared by this cloud — this interdict. I have been more for the King than the Church in this matter — yea, even for the sake of the Church; for, truly, as the case stood, you had safelier have slain an archbishop than a she-goat. But our recoverer and upholder of customs hath in this crowning of young Henry by York and London so violated the immemorial usage of the Church, that, like the grave-digger's child I have heard of, trying to ring the bell, he hath half-hanged himself in the rope of the Church, or rather pulled all the Church with the Holy Father astride of it down upon his own head.

Herbert. Were you there?

Walter Map. In the church rope? — no. I

was at the crowning, for I have pleasure in the pleasure of crowds, and to read the faces of men at a great show.

Herbert. And how did Roger of York comport himself?

Walter Map. As magnificently and archiepiscopally as our Thomas would have done: only there was a dare-devil in his eye—I should say a dare-Becket. He thought less of two kings than of one Roger, the king of the occasion. Foliot is the holier man, perhaps the better. Once or twice there ran a twitch across his face, as who should say 'what's to follow?' but Salisbury was a calf cowed by Mother Church, and every now and then glancing about him like a thief at night when he hears a door open in the house and thinks 'the master.'

Herbert. And the father-king?

Walter Map. The father's eye was so tender it would have called a goose off the green, and once he strove to hide his face, like the Greek king when his daughter was sacrificed, but he thought better of it. It was but the sacrifice of a kingdom to his son, a smaller matter; but as to the young crownling himself, he looked so malapert in the eyes, that had I fathered him I had given him more of the rod than the sceptre. Then followed the thunder of the captains and the shouting, and so we came on to the banquet, from whence there puffed

out such an incense of unctuosity into the nostrils of our Gods of Church and State, that Lucullus or Apicius might have sniffed it in their Hades of heathenism, so that the smell of their own roast had not come across it —

Herbert. Map, tho' you make your butt too big, you overshoot it.

Walter Map. For as to the fish, they demiracled the miraculous draught, and might have sunk a navy —

Herbert. There again, Goliasing and Goliathizing!

Walter Map. And as for the flesh at table, a whole Peter's sheet, with all manner of game, and four-footed things, and fowls —

Herbert. And all manner of creeping things too?

Walter Map. Well, there were abbots — but they did not bring their women; and so we were dull enough at first, but in the end we flourished out into a merriment; for the old King would act servitor and hand a dish to his son; whereupon my Lord of York — his fine-cut face bowing and beaming with all that courtesy which hath less loyalty in it than the backward scrape of the clown's heel — 'great honor,' says he, 'from the King's self to the King's son.' Did you hear the young King's quip?

Herbert. No, what was it?

Walter Map. Glancing at the days when his

father was only Earl of Anjou, he answered, 'Should not an earl's son wait on a king's son?' And when the cold corners of the King's mouth began to thaw, there was a great motion of laughter among us, part real, part childlike, to be freed from the dulness — part royal, for King and kingling both laughed, and so we could not but laugh, as by a royal necessity — part childlike again — when we felt we had laughed too long and could not stay ourselves — many mid-riff-shaken even to tears, as springs gush out after earthquakes — but from those, as I said before, there may come a conflagration — tho', to keep the figure moist and make it hold water, I should say rather, the lacrymation of a lamentation; but look if Thomas have not flung himself at the King's feet. They have made it up again — for the moment.

Herbert. Thanks to the blessed Magdalen, whose day it is!

Re-enter HENRY *and* BECKET. (*During their conference the* BARONS *and* BISHOPS OF FRANCE *and* ENGLAND *come in at back of stage*)

Becket. Ay, King! for in thy kingdom, as thou knowest,
The spouse of the Great King, thy King, hath fallen —
The daughter of Zion lies beside the way —
The priests of Baal tread her underfoot —
The golden ornaments are stolen from her —

Henry. Have I not promised to restore her, Thomas,
And send thee back again to Canterbury?

Becket. Send back again those exiles of my kin
Who wander famine-wasted thro' the world.

Henry. Have I not promised, man, to send them back?

Becket. Yet one thing more. Thou hast broken thro' the pales
Of privilege, crowning thy young son by York,
London, and Salisbury — not Canterbury.

Henry. York crown'd the Conqueror — not Canterbury.

Becket. There was no Canterbury in William's time.

Henry. But Hereford, you know, crown'd the first Henry.

Becket. But Anselm crown'd this Henry o'er again.

Henry. And thou shalt crown my Henry o'er again.

Becket. And is it then with thy good-will that I
Proceed against thine evil councillors,
And hurl the dread ban of the Church on those
Who made the second mitre play the first,
And acted me?

Henry. Well, well, then — have thy way!
It may be they were evil councillors.
What more, my lord archbishop? What more, Thomas?

I make thee full amends. Say all thy say,
But blaze not out before the Frenchmen here.

Becket. More? Nothing, so thy promise be thy deed.

Henry (*holding out his hand*). Give me thy hand. My Lords of France and England,
My friend of Canterbury and myself
Are now once more at perfect amity.
Unkingly should I be, and most unknightly,
Not striving still, however much in vain,
To rival him in Christian charity.

Herbert. All praise to Heaven, and sweet Saint Magdalen!

Henry. And so farewell until we meet in England.

Becket. I fear, my liege, we may not meet in England.

Henry. How, do you make me a traitor?

Becket. No, indeed!
That be far from thee.

Henry. Come, stay with us, then,
Before you part for England.

Becket. I am bound
For that one hour to stay with good King Louis,
Who helpt me when none else.

Herbert. He said thy life
Was not one hour's worth in England save
King Henry gave thee first the kiss of peace.

Henry. He said so? Louis, did he? look you, Herbert,

When I was in mine anger with King Louis,
I sware I would not give the kiss of peace,
Not on French ground, nor any ground but English,
Where his cathedral stands. Mine old friend, Thomas,
I would there were that perfect trust between us,
That health of heart, once ours, ere Pope or King
Had come between us! Even now — who knows? —
I might deliver all things to thy hand —
If — but I say no more — farewell, my lord.

Becket. Farewell, my liege!

[*Exit* Henry, *then the* Barons *and* Bishops.

Walter Map. There again! when the full fruit of the royal promise might have dropt into thy mouth hadst thou but opened it to thank him.

Becket. He fenced his royal promise with an *if*.

Walter Map. And is the King's *if* too high a stile for your lordship to overstep and come at all things in the next field?

Becket. Ay, if this *if* be like the devil's '*if*
Thou wilt fall down and worship me.'

Herbert. O, Thomas,
I could fall down and worship thee, my Thomas,
For thou hast trodden this wine-press alone.

Becket. Nay, of the people there are many with me.

Walter Map. I am not altogether with you, my

lord, tho' I am none of those that would raise a storm between you, lest ye should draw together like two ships in a calm. You wrong the King: he meant what he said to-day. Who shall vouch for his to-morrows? One word further. Doth not the *fewness* of anything make the fulness of it in estimation? Is not virtue prized mainly for its rarity and great baseness loathed as an exception: for were all, my lord, as noble as yourself, who would look up to you? and were all as base as — who shall I say? — Fitzurse and his following — who would look down upon them? My lord, you have put so many of the King's household out of communion, that they begin to smile at it.

Becket. At their peril, at their peril —

Walter Map. For tho' the drop may hollow out the dead stone, doth not the living skin thicken against perpetual whippings? This is the second grain of good counsel I ever proffered thee, and so cannot suffer by the rule of frequency. Have I sown it in salt? I trust not, for before God I promise you the King hath many more wolves than he can tame in his woods of England, and if it suit their purpose to howl for the King, and you still move against him, you may have no less than to die for it; but God and his free wind grant your lordship a happy home-return and the King's kiss of peace in Kent. Farewell! I must follow the King. [*Exit.*

Herbert. Ay, and I warrant the customs. Did the King
Speak of the customs?
Becket. No! — To die for it —
I live to die for it, I die to live for it.
The State will die, the Church can never die.
The King's not like to die for that which dies;
But I must die for that which never dies.
It will be so — my visions in the Lord —
It must be so, my friend! the wolves of England
Must murder her one shepherd, that the sheep
May feed in peace. False figure, Map would say.
Earth's falses are heaven's truths. And when my voice
Is martyr'd mute, and this man disappears,
That perfect trust may come again between us,
And there, there, there, not here I shall rejoice
To find my stray sheep back within the fold.
The crowd are scattering, let us move away!
And thence to England. [*Exeunt.*

ACT IV

Scene I. — The Outskirts of the Bower

Geoffrey (*coming out of the wood*). Light again! light again! Margery? no, that's a finer thing there. How it glitters!

Eleanor (*entering*). Come to me, little one. How camest thou hither?

Geoffrey. On my legs.

Eleanor. And mighty pretty legs too. Thou art the prettiest child I ever saw. Wilt thou love me?

Geoffrey. No; I only love mother.

Eleanor. Ay; and who is thy mother?

Geoffrey. They call her — But she lives secret, you see.

Eleanor. Why?

Geoffrey. Don't know why.

Eleanor. Ay, but some one comes to see her now and then. Who is he?

Geoffrey. Can't tell.

Eleanor. What does she call him?

Geoffrey. My liege.

Eleanor. Pretty one, how camest thou?

Geoffrey. There was a bit of yellow silk here and there, and it looked pretty like a glowworm, and I thought if I followed it I should find the fairies.

Eleanor. I am the fairy, pretty one, a good fairy to thy mother. Take me to her.

Geoffrey. There are good fairies and bad fairies, and sometimes she cries, and can't sleep sound o' nights because of the bad fairies.

Eleanor. She shall cry no more; she shall sleep sound enough if thou wilt take me to her. I am her good fairy.

Geoffrey. But you don't look like a good fairy. Mother does. You are not pretty like mother.

Eleanor. We can't all of us be as pretty as thou art —(*aside*) little bastard! Come, here is a golden chain I will give thee if thou wilt lead me to thy mother.

Geoffrey. No — no gold. Mother says gold spoils all. Love is the only gold.

Eleanor. I love thy mother, my pretty boy. Show me where thou camest out of the wood.

Geoffrey. By this tree; but I don't know if I can find the way back again.

Eleanor. Where 's the warder?

Geoffrey. Very bad. Somebody struck him.

Eleanor. Ay? who was that?

Geoffrey. Can't tell. But I heard say he had had a stroke, or you 'd have heard his horn be-

fore now. Come along, then; we shall see the silk here and there, and I want my supper.

[*Exeunt.*

Scene II

Rosamund's Bower

Rosamund. The boy so late; pray God, he be not lost!
I sent this Margery, and she comes not back;
I sent another, and she comes not back.
I go myself — so many alleys, crossings,
Paths, avenues — nay, if I lost him, now
The folds have fallen from the mystery
And left all naked, I were lost indeed.

Enter Geoffrey *and* Eleanor

Geoffrey, the pain thou hast put me to!

[*Seeing* Eleanor.

Ha, you!
How came you hither?

Eleanor. Your own child brought me hither!

Geoffrey. You said you could n't trust Margery, and I watched her and followed her into the woods, and I lost her and went on and on till I found the light and the lady, and she says she can make you sleep o' nights.

Rosamund. How dared you? Know you not this bower is secret,

Of and belonging to the King of England,
More sacred than his forests for the chase?
Nay, nay, Heaven help you; get you hence in haste
Lest worse befall you.

Eleanor. Child, I am mine own self
Of and belonging to the King. The King
Hath divers ofs and ons, ofs and belongings,
Almost as many as your true Mussulman —
Belongings, paramours, whom it pleases him
To call his wives; but so it chances, child,
That I am his main paramour, his sultana.
But since the fondest pair of doves will jar,
Even in a cage of gold, we had words of late,
And thereupon he call'd my children bastards.
Do you believe that you are married to him?

Rosamund. I *should* believe it.

Eleanor. You must not believe it,
Because I have a wholesome medicine here
Puts that belief asleep. Your answer, beauty!
Do you believe that you are married to him?

Rosamund. Geoffrey, my boy, I saw the ball you lost in the fork of the great willow over the brook. Go. See that you do not fall in. Go.

Geoffrey. And leave you alone with the good fairy. She calls you beauty, but I don't like her looks. Well, you bid me go, and I 'll have my ball anyhow. Shall I find you asleep when I come back?

Rosamund. Go. [*Exit* Geoffrey.

Eleanor. He is easily found again. *Do* you believe it?

I pray you then to take my sleeping-draught;
But if you should not care to take it — see!
[*Draws a dagger.*
What! have I scared the red rose from your face
Into your heart? But this will find it there,
And dig it from the root for ever.

Rosamund. Help! help!

Eleanor. They say that walls have ears; but these, it seems,
Have none! and I have none — to pity thee.

Rosamund. I do beseech you — my child is so young,
So backward too; I cannot leave him yet.
I am not so happy I could not die myself,
But the child is so young. You have children — his;
And mine is the King's child; so, if you love him —
Nay, if you love him, there is great wrong done
Somehow; but if you do not — there are those
Who say you do not love him — let me go
With my young boy, and I will hide my face,
Blacken and gipsyfy it; none shall know me;
The King shall never hear of me again,
But I will beg my bread along the world
With my young boy, and God will be our guide.

I never meant you harm in any way.
See, I can say no more.

Eleanor. Will you not say you are not married to him?

Rosamund. Ay, madam, I can *say* it, if you will.

Eleanor. Then is thy pretty boy a bastard?

Rosamund. No.

Eleanor. And thou thyself a proven wanton?

Rosamund. No.

I am none such. I never loved but one.
I have heard of such that range from love to love,
Like the wild beast — if you can call it love.
I have heard of such — yea, even among those
Who sit on thrones — I never saw any such,
Never knew any such, and howsoever
You do misname me, match'd with any such,
I am snow to mud.

Eleanor. The more the pity then
That thy true home — the heavens — cry out for thee
Who art too pure for earth.

Enter FITZURSE

Fitzurse. Give her to me.

Eleanor. The Judas-lover of our passion-play
Hath track'd us hither.

Fitzurse. Well, why not? I follow'd
You and the child: he babbled all the way.
Give her to me to make my honey-moon.

Eleanor. Ay, as the bears love honey. Could you keep her
Indungeon'd from one whisper of the wind,
Dark even from a side glance of the moon,
And oublietted in the centre — No!
I follow out my hate and thy revenge.

Fitzurse. You bade me take revenge another way —
To bring her to the dust. — Come with me, love,
And I will love thee. — Madam, let her live.
I have a far-off burrow where the King
Would miss her and for ever.

Eleanor. How sayst thou, sweetheart?
Wilt thou go with him? he will marry thee.

Rosamund. Give me the poison; set me free of him! [Eleanor *offers the vial.*
No, no! I will not have it.

Eleanor. Then this other,
The wiser choice, because my sleeping-draught
May bloat thy beauty out of shape, and make
Thy body loathsome even to thy child;
While this but leaves thee with a broken heart,
A doll-face blanch'd and bloodless, over which
If pretty Geoffrey do not break his own,
It must be broken for him.

Rosamund. O, I see now
Your purpose is to fright me — a troubadour,
You play with words. You had never used so many,

Not if you meant it, I am sure. The child —
No — mercy! No! (*Kneels.*)

Eleanor. Play! — that bosom never
Heaved under the King's hand with such true passion
As at this loveless knife that stirs the riot,
Which it will quench in blood! Slave, if he love thee,
Thy life is worth the wrestle for it. Arise,
And dash thyself against me that I may slay thee!
The worm! shall I let her go? But ha! what 's here?
By very God, the cross I gave the King!
His village darling in some lewd caress
Has wheedled it off the King's neck to her own.
By thy leave, beauty. Ay, the same! I warrant
Thou hast sworn on this my cross a hundred times
Never to leave him — and that merits death,
False oath on holy cross — for thou must leave him
To-day, but not quite yet. My good Fitzurse,
The running down the chase is kindlier sport
Even than the death. Who knows but that thy lover
May plead so pitifully, that I may spare thee?
Come hither, man; stand there. (*To* Rosamund.) Take thy one chance;
Catch at the last straw. Kneel to thy lord Fitzurse;

Crouch even because thou hatest him; fawn upon him
For thy life and thy son's.

Rosamund (*rising*). I am a Clifford,
My son a Clifford and Plantagenet.
I am to die then, tho' there stand beside thee
One who might grapple with thy dagger, if he
Had aught of man, or thou of woman; or I
Would bow to such a baseness as would make me
Most worthy of it. Both of us will die,
And I will fly with my sweet boy to heaven,
And shriek to all the saints among the stars:
'Eleanor of Aquitaine, Eleanor of England!
Murder'd by that adulteress Eleanor,
Whose doings are a horror to the east,
A hissing in the west!' Have we not heard
Raymond of Poitou, thine own uncle — nay,
Geoffrey Plantagenet, thine own husband's father —
Nay, even the accursed heathen Saladdeen —
Strike!
I challenge thee to meet me before God.
Answer me there.

Eleanor (*raising the dagger*). This in thy bosom, fool,
And after in thy bastard's!

Enter BECKET *from behind. Catches hold of her arm*

Becket. Murderess!

[*The dagger falls; they stare at one another. After a pause.*

Eleanor. My lord, we know you proud of your fine hand,
But having now admired it long enough,
We find that it is mightier than it seems —
At least mine own is frailer; you are laming it.

Becket. And lamed and maim'd to dislocation, better
Than raised to take a life which Henry bade me
Guard from the stroke that dooms thee after death
To wail in deathless flame.

Eleanor. Nor you nor I
Have now to learn, my lord, that our good Henry
Says many a thing in sudden heats which he
Gainsays by next sunrising — often ready
To tear himself for having said as much.
My lord, Fitzurse —

Becket. He too! what dost thou here?
Dares the bear slouch into the lion's den?
One downward plunge of his paw would rend away
Eyesight and manhood, life itself, from thee.
Go, lest I blast thee with anathema,
And make thee a world's horror.

Fitzurse. My lord, I shall
Remember this.

Becket. I *do* remember thee;
Lest I remember thee to the lion, go.

[*Exit* Fitzurse.

Take up your dagger; put it in the sheath.

Eleanor. Might not your courtesy stoop to hand
it me?
But crowns must bow when mitres sit so high.
Well — well — too costly to be left or lost.
[*Picks up the dagger.*
I had it from an Arab soldan, who,
When I was there in Antioch, marvell'd at
Our unfamiliar beauties of the west;
But wonder'd more at my much constancy
To the monk-king, Louis, our former burthen,
From whom, as being too kin, you know, my lord,
God's grace and Holy Church deliver'd us.
I think, time given, I could have talk'd him out of
His ten wives into one. Look at the hilt.
What excellent workmanship! In our poor west
We cannot do it so well.
Becket. We can do worse.
Madam, I saw your dagger at her throat;
I heard your savage cry.
Eleanor. Well acted, was it?
A comedy meant to seem a tragedy —
A feint, a farce. My honest lord, you are known
Thro' all the courts of Christendom as one
That mars a cause with over violence.
You have wrong'd Fitzurse. I speak not of myself.
We thought to scare this minion of the King
Back from her churchless commerce with the King
To the fond arms of her first love, Fitzurse,

Who swore to marry her. You have spoilt the farce.
My savage cry? Why, she — she — when I strove
To work against her license for her good,
Bark'd out at me such monstrous charges that
The King himself, for love of his own sons,
If hearing, would have spurn'd her; whereupon
I menaced her with this, as when we threaten
A yelper with a stick. Nay, I deny not
That I was somewhat anger'd. Do you hear me?
Believe or no, I care not. You have lost
The ear of the King. I have it. — My lord paramount,
Our great High-priest, will not your Holiness
Vouchsafe a gracious answer to your Queen?

Becket. Rosamund hath not answer'd you one word;
Madam, I will not answer you one word.
Daughter, the world hath trick'd thee. Leave it, daughter;
Come thou with me to Godstow nunnery,
And live what may be left thee of a life
Saved as by miracle alone with Him
Who gave it.

Re-enter GEOFFREY

Geoffrey. Mother, you told me a great fib; it was n't in the willow.

Becket. Follow us, my son, and we will find it
for thee —
Or something manlier.
[*Exeunt* Becket, Rosamund, *and* Geoffrey.
Eleanor. The world hath trick'd her — that 's
the King; if so,
There was the farce, the feint — not mine. And
yet
I am all but sure my dagger was a feint
Till the worm turn'd — not life shot up in blood,
But death drawn in; — (*looking at the vial*) *this* was
no feint, then? no.
But can I swear to that, had she but given
Plain answer to plain query? nay, methinks
Had she but bowed herself to meet the wave
Of humiliation, worshipt whom she loathed,
I should have let her be, scorn'd her too much
To harm her. Henry — Becket tells him this —
To take my life might lose him Aquitaine.
Too politic for that. Imprison me?
No, for it came to nothing — only a feint.
Did she not tell me I was playing on her?
I'll swear to mine own self it was a feint.
Why should I swear, Eleanor, who am, or was,
A sovereign power? The King plucks out their
eyes
Who anger him, and shall not I, the Queen,
Tear out her heart — kill, kill with knife or venom
One of his slanderous harlots? 'None of such?'

I love her none the more. Tut, the chance gone,
She lives — but not for him; one point is gain'd.
O, I that thro' the Pope divorced King Louis,
Scorning his monkery, — I that wedded Henry,
Honoring his manhood — will he not mock at me,
The jealous fool balk'd of her will — with *him?*
But he and he must never meet again.
Reginald Fitzurse!

Re-enter FITZURSE

Fitzurse. Here, Madam, at your pleasure.
Eleanor. My pleasure is to have a man about me.
Why did you slink away so like a cur?
Fitzurse. Madam, I am as much man as the King.
Madam, I fear Church-censures like your King.
Eleanor. He grovels to the Church when he's black-blooded,
But kinglike fought the proud archbishop, — kinglike
Defied the Pope, and, like his kingly sires,
The Normans, striving still to break or bind
The spiritual giant with our island laws
And customs, made me for the moment proud
Even of that stale Church-bond which link'd me with him
To bear him kingly sons. I am not so sure

But that I love him still. Thou as much man!
No more of that; we will to France and be
Beforehand with the King, and brew from out
This Godstow-Becket intermeddling such
A strong hate-philtre as may madden him — madden
Against his priest beyond all hellebore.

ACT V

Scene I. — Castle in Normandy. King's Chamber

Henry, Roger of York, Foliot, Jocelyn of Salisbury

Roger of York. Nay, nay, my liege,
He rides abroad with armed followers,
Hath broken all his promises to thyself,
Cursed and anathematized us right and left,
Stirr'd up a party there against your son —
Henry. Roger of York, you always hated him,
Even when you both were boys at Theobald's.
Roger of York. I always hated boundless arrogance.
In mine own cause I strove against him there,
And in thy cause I strive against him now.
Henry. I cannot think he moves against my son,
Knowing right well with what a tenderness
He loved my son.
Roger of York. Before you made him king.
But Becket ever moves against a king.
The Church is all — the crime to be a king.
We trust your Royal Grace, lord of more land

Than any crown in Europe, will not yield
To lay your neck beneath your citizen's heel.

Henry. Not to a Gregory of my throning! No.

Foliot. My royal liege, in aiming at your love,
It may be sometimes I have overshot
My duties to our Holy Mother Church,
Tho' all the world allows I fall no inch
Behind this Becket, rather go beyond
In scourgings, macerations, mortifyings,
Fasts, disciplines that clear the spiritual eye,
And break the soul from earth. Let all that be.
I boast not; but you know thro' all this quarrel
I still have cleaved to the crown, in hope the crown
Would cleave to me that but obey'd the crown,
Crowning your son; for which our loyal service,
And since we likewise swore to obey the customs,
York and myself, and our good Salisbury here,
Are push'd from out communion of the Church.

Jocelyn of Salisbury. Becket hath trodden on us like worms, my liege,
Trodden one half dead; one half, but half-alive,
Cries to the King.

Henry (aside). Take care o' thyself, O King!

Jocelyn of Salisbury. Being so crush'd and so humiliated
We scarcely dare to bless the food we eat
Because of Becket.

Henry. What would ye have me do?

Roger of York. Summon your barons; take their counsel; yet
I know — could swear — as long as Becket breathes,
Your Grace will never have one quiet hour.

Henry. What? — Ay — but pray you do not work upon me.
I see your drift — it may be so — and yet
You know me easily anger'd. Will you hence?
He shall absolve you — you shall have redress.
I have a dizzying headache. Let me rest.
I'll call you by and by.

[*Exeunt* Roger of York, Foliot, *and* Jocelyn of Salisbury.

Would he were dead! I have lost all love for him.
If God would take him in some sudden way —
Would he were dead! [*Lies down.*

Page (*entering*). My liege, the Queen of England.

Henry. God's eyes! [*Starting up.*

Enter ELEANOR

Eleanor. Of England? Say of Aquitaine.
I am no Queen of England. I had dream'd
I was the bride of England, and a queen.

Henry. And, — while you dream'd you were the bride of England, —
Stirring her baby-king against me? ha!

Eleanor. The brideless Becket is thy king and mine;
I will go live and die in Aquitaine.

Henry. Except I clap thee into prison here,
Lest thou shouldst play the wanton there again.
Ha, you of Aquitaine! O you of Aquitaine!
You were but Aquitaine to Louis — no wife;
You are only Aquitaine to me — no wife.

Eleanor. And why, my lord, should I be wife to one
That only wedded me for Aquitaine?
Yet this no-wife — her six and thirty sail
Of Provence blew you to your English throne;
And this no-wife has borne you four brave sons,
And one of them at least is like to prove
Bigger in our small world than thou art.

Henry. Ay —
Richard, if he *be* mine — I hope him mine.
But thou art like enough to make him thine.

Eleanor. Becket is like enough to make all his.

Henry. Methought I had recover'd of the Becket,
That all was planed and bevell'd smooth again,
Save from some hateful cantrip of thine own.

Eleanor. I will go live and die in Aquitaine.
I dream'd I was the consort of a king,
Not one whose back his priest has broken.

Henry. What!
Is the end come? You, will you crown my foe
My victor in mid-battle? I will be
Sole master of my house. The end is mine.
What game, what juggle, what devilry are you playing?
Why do you thrust this Becket on me again?

Eleanor. Why? for I *am* true wife, and have my fears
Lest Becket thrust you even from your throne.
Do you know this cross, my liege?
Henry (*turning his head*). Away! Not I.
Eleanor. Not even the central diamond, worth, I think,
Half of the Antioch whence I had it.
Henry. That?
Eleanor. I gave it you, and you your paramour;
She sends it back, as being dead to earth,
So dead henceforth to you.
Henry. Dead! you have murder'd her,
Found out her secret bower and murder'd her.
Eleanor. Your Becket knew the secret of your bower.
Henry (*calling out*). Ho there! thy rest of life is hopeless prison.
Eleanor. And what would my own Aquitaine say to that?
First, free thy captive from *her* hopeless prison.
Henry. O devil, can I free her from the grave?
Eleanor. You are too tragic; both of us are players
In such a comedy as our court of Provence
Had laugh'd at. That 's a delicate Latin lay
Of Walter Map: the lady holds the cleric
Lovelier than any soldier, his poor tonsure

A crown of Empire. Will you have it again?
(*Offering the cross. He dashes it down.*)
Saint Cupid, that is too irreverent.
Then mine once more. (*Puts it on.*)
Your cleric hath your lady.
Nay, what uncomely faces, could he see you!
Foam at the mouth because King Thomas, lord
Not only of your vassals but amours,
Thro' chastest honor of the Decalogue
Hath used the full authority of his Church
To put her into Godstow nunnery.

Henry. To put her into Godstow nunnery!
He dared not — liar! yet, yet I remember —
I do remember.
He bade me put her into a nunnery —
Into Godstow, into Hellstow, Devilstow!
The Church! the Church!
God's eyes! I would the Church were down in hell! [*Exit.*

Eleanor. Aha!

Enter the four KNIGHTS

Fitzurse. What made the King cry out so furiously?

Eleanor. Our Becket, who will not absolve the bishops.
I think ye four have cause to love this Becket.

Fitzurse. I hate him for his insolence to all.

De Tracy. And I for all his insolence to thee.

De Brito. I hate him for I hate him is my reason,
And yet I hate him for a hypocrite.

De Morville. I do not love him, for he did his best
To break the barons, and now braves the King.

Eleanor. Strike, then, at once, the King would have him — See!

Re-enter HENRY

Henry. No man to love me, honor me, obey me!
Sluggards and fools!
The slave that eat my bread has kick'd his King!
The dog I cramm'd with dainties worried me!
The fellow that on a lame jade came to court,
A ragged cloak for saddle — he, he, he,
To shake my throne, to push into my chamber —
My bed, where even the slave is private — he —
I 'll have her out again, he shall absolve
The bishops — they but did my will — not you —
Sluggards and fools, why do you stand and stare?
You are no King's men — you — you — you are Becket's men.
Down with King Henry! up with the Archbishop!
Will no man free me from this pestilent priest?

[*Exit.*

[*The* Knights *draw their swords.*

Eleanor. Are ye King's men? I am King's woman, I.

The Knights. King's men! King's men!

Scene II

A Room in Canterbury Monastery

Becket *and* John of Salisbury

Becket. York said so?

John of Salisbury. Yes: a man may take good counsel
Even from his foe.

Becket. York will say anything.
What is he saying now? gone to the King
And taken our anathema with him. York!
Can the King de-anathematize this York?

John of Salisbury. Thomas, I would thou hadst returned to England
Like some wise prince of this world from his wars,
With more of olive-branch and amnesty
For foes at home — thou hast raised the world against thee.

Becket. Why, John, my kingdom is not of this world.

John of Salisbury. If it were more of this world it might be
More of the next. A policy of wise pardon
Wins here as well as there. To bless thine enemies —

Becket. Ay, mine, not Heaven's.

John of Salisbury. And may there not be something
Of this world's leaven in thee too, when crying

On Holy Church to thunder out her rights
And thine own wrong so pitilessly? Ah, Thomas,
The lightnings that we think are only Heaven's
Flash sometimes out of earth against the heavens.
The soldier, when he lets his whole self go
Lost in the common good, the common wrong,
Strikes truest even for his own self. I crave
Thy pardon — I have still thy leave to speak.
Thou hast waged God's war against the King; and yet
We are self-uncertain creatures, and we may,
Yea, even when we know not, mix our spites
And private hates with our defence of Heaven.

Enter EDWARD GRIM

Becket. Thou art but yesterday from Cambridge, Grim;
What say ye there of Becket?
Grim. *I* believe him
The bravest in our roll of primates down
From Austin — there are some — for there are men
Of canker'd judgment everywhere —
Becket. Who hold
With York, with York against me.
Grim. Well, my lord,
A stranger monk desires access to you.
Becket. York against Canterbury, York against God!
I am open to him. [*Exit* Grim.

Enter ROSAMUND *as a Monk*

Rosamund. Can I speak with you
Alone, my father?

Becket. Come you to confess?

Rosamund. Not now.

Becket. Then speak; this is my other self,
Who, like my conscience, never lets me be.

Rosamund (*throwing back the cowl*). I know him,
our good John of Salisbury.

Becket. Breaking already from thy novitiate
To plunge into this bitter world again —
These wells of Marah! I am grieved, my daughter.
I thought that I had made a peace for thee.

Rosamund. Small peace was mine in my novitiate, father.
Thro' all closed doors a dreadful whisper crept
That thou wouldst excommunicate the King.
I could not eat, sleep, pray. I had with me
The monk's disguise thou gavest me for my bower;
I think our abbess knew it and allow'd it.
I fled, and found thy name a charm to get me
Food, roof, and rest. I met a robber once;
I told him I was bound to see the archbishop:
'Pass on,' he said, and in thy name I pass'd
From house to house. In one a son stone-blind
Sat by his mother's hearth. He had gone too far
Into the King's own woods; and the poor mother,
Soon as she learnt I was a friend of thine,
Cried out against the cruelty of the King.

I said it was the King's courts not the King.
But she would not believe me, and she wish'd
The Church were king; she had seen the archbishop once,
So mild, so kind. The people love thee, father.

Becket. Alas! when I was Chancellor to the King,
I fear I was as cruel as the King.

Rosamund. Cruel? O, no — it is the law, not he;
The customs of the realm.

Becket. The customs! customs!

Rosamund. My lord, you have not excommunicated him?
O, if you have, absolve him!

Becket. Daughter, daughter,
Deal not with things you know not.

Rosamund. I know *him.*
Then you have done it, and I call *you* cruel.

John of Salisbury. No, daughter, you mistake our good archbishop;
For once in France the King had been so harsh,
He thought to excommunicate him — Thomas,
You could not — old affection master'd you,
You falter'd into tears.

Rosamund. God bless him for it!

Becket. Nay, make me not a woman, John of Salisbury,
Nor make me traitor to my holy office.
Did not a man's voice ring along the aisle,

'The King is sick and almost unto death.'
How could I excommunicate him then?

Rosamund. And wilt thou excommunicate him now?

Becket. Daughter, my time is short, I shall not do it.

And were it longer — well — I should not do it.

Rosamund. Thanks in this life, and in the life to come!

Becket. Get thee back to thy nunnery with all haste;

Let this be thy last trespass. But one question —
How fares thy pretty boy, the little Geoffrey?
No fever, cough, croup, sickness?

Rosamund. No, but saved
From all that by our solitude. The plagues
That smite the city spare the solitudes.

Becket. God save him from all sickness of the soul!

Thee too, thy solitude among thy nuns,
May that save thee! Doth he remember me?

Rosamund. I warrant him.

Becket. He is marvellously like thee.

Rosamund. Liker the King.

Becket. No, daughter.

Rosamund. Ay, but wait
Till his nose rises; he will be very king.

Becket. Even so; but think not of the King. Farewell!

Rosamund. My lord, the city is full of armed men.

Becket. Even so. Farewell!

Rosamund. I will but pass to vespers,
And breathe one prayer for my liege-lord the King,
His child and mine own soul, and so return.

Becket. Pray for me too; much need of prayer have I. [Rosamund *kneels and goes.*
Dan John, how much we lose, we celibates,
Lacking the love of woman and of child!

John of Salisbury. More gain than lost; for of your wives you shall
Find one a slut whose fairest linen seems
Foul as her dust-cloth, if she used it — one
So charged with tongue that every thread of thought
Is broken ere it joins — a shrew to boot,
Whose evil song far on into the night
Thrills to the topmost tile — no hope but death;
One slow, fat, white, a burthen of the hearth;
And one that being thwarted ever swoons
And weeps herself into the place of power;
And one an *uxor pauperis Ibyci.*
So rare the household honey-making bee,
Man's help! but we, we have the Blessed Virgin
For worship, and our Mother Church for bride;
And all the souls we saved and father'd here
Will greet us as our babes in Paradise.
What noise was that? she told us of arm'd men
Here in the city. Will you not withdraw?

Becket. I once was out with Henry in the days
When Henry loved me, and we came upon
A wild-fowl sitting on her nest, so still
I reach'd my hand and touch'd; she did not stir;
The snow had frozen round her, and she sat
Stone-dead upon a heap of ice-cold eggs.
Look! how this love, this mother, runs thro' all
The world God made — even the beast — the bird!

John of Salisbury. Ay, still a lover of the beast and bird?
But these arm'd men — will you not hide yourself?
Perchance the fierce De Brocs from Saltwood Castle,
To assail our Holy Mother lest she brood
Too long o'er this hard egg, the world, and send
Her whole heart's heat into it, till it break
Into young angels. Pray you, hide yourself.

Becket. There was a little fair-hair'd Norman maid
Lived in my mother's house; if Rosamund is
The world's rose, as her name imports her — she
Was the world's lily.

John of Salisbury. Ay, and what of her?

Becket. She died of leprosy.

John of Salisbury. I know not why
You call these old things back again, my lord.

Becket. The drowning man, they say, remembers all
The chances of his life, just ere he dies.

John of Salisbury. Ay — but these arm'd men
— will *you* drown *yourself?*
He loses half the meed of martyrdom
Who will be martyr when he might escape.
Becket. What day of the week? Tuesday?
John of Salisbury. Tuesday, my lord.
Becket. On a Tuesday was I born, and on a Tuesday
Baptized; and on a Tuesday did I fly
Forth from Northampton; on a Tuesday pass'd
From England into bitter banishment;
On a Tuesday at Pontigny came to me
The ghostly warning of my martyrdom;
On a Tuesday from mine exile I return'd,
And on a Tuesday —

TRACY *enters, then* FITZURSE, DE BRITO, *and* DE MORVILLE. MONKS *following*

— on a Tuesday — Tracy!
(*A long silence, broken by* Fitzurse *saying, contemptuously,*)
God help thee!
John of Salisbury (*aside*). How the good archbishop reddens!
He never yet could brook the note of scorn.
Fitzurse. My lord, we bring a message from the King,
Beyond the water; will you have it alone,
Or with these listeners near you?

Becket. As you will.

Fitzurse. Nay, as *you* will.

Becket. Nay, as *you* will.

John of Salisbury. Why, then
Better perhaps to speak with them apart.
Let us withdraw.

[*All go out except the four* Knights *and* Becket.

Fitzurse. We are all alone with him.
Shall I not smite him with his own cross-staff?

De Morville. No, look! the door is open: let him be.

Fitzurse. The King condemns your excommunicating —

Becket. This is no secret, but a public matter.
In here again!

JOHN OF SALISBURY *and* MONKS *return*

Now, sirs, the King's commands!

Fitzurse. The King beyond the water, thro' our voices,
Commands you to be dutiful and leal
To your young King on this side of the water,
Not scorn him for the foibles of his youth.
What! you would make his coronation void
By cursing those who crown'd him. Out upon you!

Becket. Reginald, all men know I loved the prince.
His father gave him to my care, and I

Became his second father. He had his faults,
For which I would have laid mine own life down
To help him from them, since indeed I loved him,
And love him next after my lord his father.
Rather than dim the splendor of his crown
I fain would treble and quadruple it
With revenues, realms, and golden provinces
So that were done in equity.

Fitzurse. You have broken
Your bond of peace, your treaty with the King —
Wakening such brawls and loud disturbances
In England, that he calls you over-sea
To answer for it in his Norman courts.

Becket. Prate not of bonds, for never, O, never again
Shall the waste voice of the bond-breaking sea
Divide me from the mother church of England,
My Canterbury. Loud disturbances!
O, ay — the bells rang out even to deafening,
Organ and pipe, and dulcimer, chants and hymns
In all the churches, trumpets in the halls,
Sobs, laughter, cries; they spread their raiment down
Before me — would have made my pathway flowers,
Save that it was midwinter in the street,
But full midsummer in those honest hearts.

Fitzurse. The King commands you to absolve the bishops
Whom you have excommunicated.

Becket. I?
Not I, the Pope. Ask *him* for absolution.
Fitzurse. But you advised the Pope.
Becket. And so I did.
They have but to submit.
The Four Knights. The King commands you.
We are all King's men.
Becket. King's men at least should know
That their own King closed with me last July
That I should pass the censures of the Church
On those that crown'd young Henry in this realm,
And trampled on the rights of Canterbury.
Fitzurse. What! dare you charge the King with treachery?
He sanction thee to excommunicate
The prelates whom he chose to crown his son!
Becket. I spake no word of treachery, Reginald.
But for the truth of this I make appeal
To all the archbishops, bishops, prelates, barons,
Monks, knights, five hundred, that were there and heard.
Nay, you yourself were there; you heard yourself.
Fitzurse. I was not there.
Becket. I saw you there.
Fitzurse. I was not.
Becket. You were. I never forget anything.
Fitzurse. He makes the King a traitor, me a liar.
How long shall we forbear him?

John of Salisbury (*drawing* Becket *aside*). O my good lord,
Speak with them privately on this hereafter.
You see they have been revelling, and I fear
Are braced and brazen'd up with Christmas wines
For any murderous brawl.

Becket. And yet they prate
Of mine, my brawls, when those that name themselves
Of the King's part have broken down our barns,
Wasted our diocese, outraged our tenants,
Lifted our produce, driven our clerics out —
Why they, your friends, those ruffians, the De Brocs,
They stood on Dover beach to murder me,
They slew my stags in mine own manor here,
Mutilated, poor brute, my sumpter-mule,
Plunder'd the vessel full of Gascon wine,
The old King's present, carried off the casks,
Kill'd half the crew, dungeon'd the other half
In Pevensey Castle —

De Morville. Why not rather then,
If this be so, complain to your young King,
Not punish of your own authority?

Becket. Mine enemies barr'd all access to the boy.
They knew he loved me.
Hugh, Hugh, how proudly you exalt your head!
Nay, when they seek to overturn our rights,
I ask no leave of king, or mortal man,
To set them straight again. Alone I do it.

Give to the King the things that are the King's,
And those of God to God.

Fitzurse. Threats! threats! ye hear him.
What! will he excommunicate all the world?

[*The* Knights *come round* Becket.

De Tracy. He shall not.

De Brito. Well, as yet — I should be grateful —
He hath not excommunicated *me*.

Becket. Because thou wast *born* excommunicate.
I never spied in thee one gleam of grace.

De Brito. Your Christian's Christian charity!

Becket. By Saint Denis —

De Brito. Ay, by Saint Denis, now will he flame out,
And lose his head as old Saint Denis did.

Becket. Ye think to scare me from my loyalty
To God and to the Holy Father. No!
Tho' all the swords in England flash'd above me
Ready to fall at Henry's word or yours —
Tho' all the loud-lung'd trumpets upon earth
Blared from the heights of all the thrones of her kings,
Blowing the world against me, I would stand
Clothed with the full authority of Rome,
Mail'd in the perfect panoply of faith,
First of the foremost of their files who die
For God, to people heaven in the great day
When God makes up his jewels. Once I fled —

Never again, and you — I marvel at you —
Ye know what is between us. Ye have sworn
Yourselves my men when I was Chancellor —
My vassals — and yet threaten your archbishop
In his own house.

Knights. Nothing can be between us
That goes against our fealty to the King.

Fitzurse. And in his name we charge you that ye keep
This traitor from escaping.

Becket. Rest you easy,
For I am easy to keep. I shall not fly.
Here, here, here will you find me.

De Morville. Know you not
You have spoken to the peril of your life?

Becket. As I shall speak again.

Fitzurse, De Tracy, and De Brito. To arms!
[*They rush out*, De Morville *lingers.*

Becket. De Morville,
I had thought so well of you; and even now
You seem the least assassin of the four.
O, do not damn yourself for company!
Is it too late for me to save your soul?
I pray you for one moment stay and speak.

De Morville. Becket, it *is* too late. [*Exit.*

Becket. Is it too late?
Too late on earth may be too soon in hell.

Knights (*in the distance*). Close the great gate — ho, there — upon the town!

Becket's Retainers. Shut the hall-doors!

[*A pause.*

Becket. You hear them, brother John;
Why do you stand so silent, brother John?

John of Salisbury. For I was musing on an ancient saw,
Suaviter in modo, fortiter in re;
Is strength less strong when hand-in-hand with grace?
Gratior in pulchro corpore virtus. Thomas,
Why should you heat yourself for such as these?

Becket. Methought I answer'd moderately enough.

John of Salisbury. As one that blows the coal to cool the fire.
My lord, I marvel why you never lean
On any man's advising but your own.

Becket. Is it so, Dan John? well, what should I have done?

John of Salisbury. You should have taken counsel with your friends
Before these bandits brake into your presence.
They seek — you make — occasion for your death.

Becket. My counsel is already taken, John.
I am prepared to die.

John of Salisbury. We are sinners all.
The best of all not all-prepared to die.

Becket. God's will be done!

John of Salisbury. Ay, well. God's will be done!

Grim (*re-entering*). My lord, the knights are arming in the garden
Beneath the sycamore.

Becket. Good! let them arm.

Grim. And one of the De Brocs is with them, Robert,
The apostate monk that was with Randulf here.
He knows the twists and turnings of the place.

Becket. No fear!

Grim. No fear, my lord.

[*Crashes on the hall doors. The* Monks *flee.*

Becket (*rising*). Our dovecote flown!
I cannot tell why monks should all be cowards.

John of Salisbury. Take refuge in your own cathedral, Thomas.

Becket. Do they not fight the Great Fiend day by day?
Valor and holy life should go together.
Why should all monks be cowards?

John of Salisbury. Are they so?
I say, take refuge in your own cathedral.

Becket. Ay, but I told them I would wait them here.

Grim. May they not say you dared not show yourself
In your old place? and vespers are beginning.

[*Bell rings for vespers till end of scene.*

You should attend the office, give them heart.
They fear you slain; they dread they know not what.

Becket. Ay, monks, not men.

Grim. I am a monk, my lord.
Perhaps, my lord, you wrong us.
Some would stand by you to the death.

Becket. Your pardon.

John of Salisbury. He said, 'Attend the office.'

Becket. Attend the office?
Why then — the Cross! — who bears my Cross before me?
Methought they would have brain'd me with it, John. [Grim *takes it.*

Grim. I! Would that I could bear thy cross indeed!

Becket. The mitre!

John of Salisbury. Will you wear it? — there!
[Becket *puts on the mitre.*

Becket. The pall!
I go to meet my King! [*Puts on the pall.*

Grim. To meet the King?
[*Crashes on the doors as they go out.*

John of Salisbury. Why do you move with such a stateliness?
Can you not hear them yonder like a storm,
Battering the doors, and breaking thro' the walls?

Becket. Why do the heathen rage? My two good friends,
What matters murder'd here, or murder'd there?
And yet my dream foretold my martyrdom
In mine own church. It is God's will. Go on.
Nay, drag me not. We must not seem to fly.

Scene III

North Transept of Canterbury Cathedral

On the right hand a flight of steps leading to the Choir, another flight on the left, leading to the North Aisle. Winter afternoon slowly darkening. Low thunder now and then of an approaching storm. Monks *heard chanting the service.* Rosamund *kneeling*

Rosamund. O blessed saint, O glorious Benedict, —
These arm'd men in the city, these fierce faces —
Thy holy follower founded Canterbury —
Save that dear head which now is Canterbury,
Save him, he saved my life, he saved my child,
Save him, his blood would darken Henry's name;
Save him till all as saintly as thyself
He miss the searching flame of purgatory,
And pass at once perfect to Paradise.
[*Noise of steps and voices in the cloisters.*
Hark! Is it they? Coming! He is not here —
Not yet, thank heaven. O, save him!
[*Goes up steps leading to choir.*
Becket (*entering, forced along by* John of Salisbury *and* Grim). No, I tell you!
I cannot bear a hand upon my person;
Why do you force me thus against my will?
Grim. My lord, we force you from your enemies.

Becket. As you would force a king from being crown'd.

John of Salisbury. We must not force the crown of martyrdom.

[*Service stops.* Monks *come down from the stairs that lead to the choir.*

Monks. Here is the great archbishop! He lives! He lives!

Die with him, and be glorified together.

Becket. Together? — get you back! go on with the office.

Monks. Come, then, with us to vespers.

Becket. How can I come
When you so block the entry? Back, I say!
Go on with the office. Shall not Heaven be served
Tho' earth's last earthquake clash'd the minster-bells,
And the great deeps were broken up again,
And hiss'd against the sun? [*Noise in the cloisters.*

Monks. The murderers, hark!
Let us hide! let us hide!

Becket. What do these people fear?

Monks. Those arm'd men in the cloister.

Becket. Be not such cravens!
I will go out and meet them.

Grim and Others. Shut the doors!
We will not have him slain before our face.

[*They close the doors of the transept. Knocking.*

Fly, fly, my lord, before they burst the doors!

[*Knocking.*

Becket. Why, these are our own monks who follow'd us!
And will you bolt them out, and have *them* slain?
Undo the doors; the church is not a castle.
Knock, and it shall be open'd. Are you deaf?
What, have I lost authority among you?
Stand by, make way!

[*Opens the doors. Enter* Monks *from cloister.*

Come in, my friends, come in!
Nay, faster, faster!

Monks. O, my lord archbishop,
A score of knights, all arm'd with swords and axes —
To the choir, to the choir!

[Monks *divide, part flying by the stairs on the right, part by those on the left. The rush of these last bears* Becket *along with them some way up the steps, where he is left standing alone.*

Becket. Shall I too pass to the choir,
And die upon the patriarchal throne
Of all my predecessors?

John of Salisbury. No, to the crypt!
Twenty steps down. Stumble not in the darkness,
Lest they should seize thee.

Grim. To the crypt? no — no,
To the chapel of Saint Blaise beneath the roof!

John of Salisbury (*pointing upward and downward*). That way or this! Save thyself either way.

Becket. O, no, not either way, nor any way
Save by that way which leads thro' night to light.
Not twenty steps, but one.
And fear not I should stumble in the darkness,
Not tho' it be their hour, the power of darkness,
But my hour too, the power of light in darkness!
I am not in the darkness but the light,
Seen by the Church in heaven, the Church on earth—
The power of life in death to make her free!

Enter the four KNIGHTS. JOHN OF SALISBURY *flies to the altar of Saint Benedict*

Fitzurse. Here, here, King's men!
[*Catches hold of the last flying* Monk.
Where is the traitor Becket?

Monk. I am not he! I am not he, my lord.
I am not he indeed!

Fitzurse. Hence to the fiend!
[*Pushes him away.*
Where is this treble traitor to the King?

De Tracy. Where is the archbishop, Thomas Becket?

Becket. Here.
No traitor to the King, but Priest of God,
Primate of England. [*Descending into the transept.*

I am he ye seek.
What would ye have of me?

Fitzurse. Your life.

De Tracy. Your life.

De Morville. Save that you will absolve the bishops.

Becket. Never,—
Except they make submission to the Church.
You had my answer to that cry before.

De Morville. Why, then you are a dead man; flee!

Becket. I will not.
I am readier to be slain than thou to slay.
Hugh, I know well thou hast but half a heart
To bathe this sacred pavement with my blood.
God pardon thee and these, but God's full curse
Shatter you all to pieces if ye harm
One of my flock!

Fitzurse. Was not the great gate shut?
They are thronging in to vespers — half the town.
We shall be overwhelm'd. Seize him and carry him!
Come with us — nay — thou art our prisoner — come!

De Morville. Ay, make him prisoner, do not harm the man.

[Fitzurse *lays hold of the* Archbishop's *pall.*

Becket. Touch me not!

De Brito. How the good priest gods himself!
He is not yet ascended to the Father.

Fitzurse. I will not only touch, but drag thee hence.

Becket. Thou art my man, thou art my vassal. Away!

[*Flings him off till he reels, almost to falling.*

De Tracy (*lays hold of the pall*). Come; as he said, thou art our prisoner.

Becket. Down!

[*Throws him headlong.*

Fitzurse (*advances with drawn sword*). I told thee that I should remember thee!

Becket. Profligate pander!

Fitzurse. Do you hear that? strike, strike.

[*Strikes off the* Archbishop's *mitre, and wounds him in the forehead.*

Becket (*covers his eyes with his hand*). I do commend my cause to God, the Virgin,
Saint Denis of France and Saint Alphege of England,
And all the tutelar Saints of Canterbury.

[Grim *wraps his arms about the* Archbishop.

Spare this defence, dear brother.

[Tracy *has arisen, and approaches, hesitatingly, with his sword raised.*

Fitzurse. Strike him, Tracy!

Rosamund (*rushing down steps from the choir*). No, no, no, no!

Fitzurse. This wanton here. De Morville,
Hold her away.

De Morville. I hold her.

Rosamund (*held back by* De Morville, *and stretching out her arms*). Mercy, mercy,
As you would hope for mercy!

Fitzurse. Strike, I say!

Grim. O God, O noble knights, O sacrilege!
Strike our archbishop in his own cathedral!
The Pope, the King, will curse you — the whole world
Abhor you; ye will die the death of dogs!
Nay, nay, good Tracy. [*Lifts his arm.*

Fitzurse. Answer not, but strike.

De Tracy. There is my answer then.

[*Sword falls on* Grim's *arm, and glances from it, wounding* Becket.

Grim. Mine arm is sever'd.
I can no more — fight out the good fight — die Conqueror.

[*Staggers into the chapel of Saint Benedict.*

Becket (*falling on his knees*). At the right hand of Power —
Power and great glory — for thy Church, O Lord —
Into thy hands, O Lord — into thy hands! —

[*Sinks prone.*

De Brito. This last to rid thee of a world of brawls! (*Kills him.*)
The traitor 's dead, and will arise no more.

Fitzurse. Nay, have we still'd him? What!
the great archbishop!
Does he breathe? No?
De Tracy. No, Reginald, he is dead.
[*Storm bursts.*[1]
De Morville. Will the earth gape and swallow us?
De Brito. The deed 's done —
Away!
[De Brito, De Tracy, Fitzurse, *rush out, crying* '*King's men!*' De Morville *follows slowly. Flashes of lightning thro' the Cathedral.* Rosamund *seen kneeling by the body of* Becket.

[1] A tremendous thunderstorm actually broke over the Cathedral as the murderers were leaving it.

THE FALCON

1879

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

THE COUNT FEDERIGO DEGLI ALBERIGHI.
FILIPPO, *the Count's foster-brother.*
THE LADY GIOVANNA.
ELISABETTA, *the Count's nurse.*

THE FALCON

SCENE. — AN ITALIAN COTTAGE, CASTLE AND MOUNTAINS SEEN THROUGH WINDOW

ELISABETTA *discovered seated on stool in window, darning. The Count with Falcon on his hand comes down through the door at back. A withered wreath on the wall*

Elisabetta. So, my lord, the Lady Giovanna, who hath been away so long, came back last night with her son to the castle.

Count. Hear that, my bird! Art thou not jealous of her?

My princess of the cloud, my plumed purveyor,
My far-eyed queen of the winds — thou that canst soar
Beyond the morning lark, and, howsoe'er
Thy quarry wind and wheel, swoop down upon him
Eagle-like, lightning-like — strike, make his feathers
Glance in mid heaven. [*Crosses to chair.*
I would thou hadst a mate!
Thy breed will die with thee, and mine with me;
I am as lone and loveless as thyself. [*Sits in chair.*
Giovanna here! Ay, ruffle thyself — *be* jealous!
Thou shouldst be jealous of her. Tho' I bred thee

The full-train'd marvel of all falconry,
And love thee and thou me, yet if Giovanna
Be here again — No, no! Buss me, my bird!
The stately widow has no heart for me.
Thou art the last friend left me upon earth —
No, no again to that! [*Rises and turns.*
My good old nurse,
I had forgotten thou wast sitting there.

Elisabetta. Ay, and forgotten thy foster-brother too.

Count. Bird-babble for my falcon! Let it pass.
What art thou doing there?

Elisabetta. Darning, your lordship.
We cannot flaunt it in new feathers now.
Nay, if we *will* buy diamond necklaces
To please our lady, we must darn, my lord.
This old thing here (*points to necklace round her neck*), they are but blue beads — my Piero,
God rest his honest soul, he bought 'em for me,
Ay, but he knew I meant to marry him.
How couldst thou do it, my son? How couldst thou do it?

Count. She saw it at a dance, upon a neck
Less lovely than her own, and long'd for it.

Elisabetta. She told thee as much?

Count. No, no — a friend of hers.

Elisabetta. Shame on her that she took it at thy hands,
She rich enough to have bought it for herself!

Count. She would have robb'd me then of a great pleasure.

Elisabetta. But hath she yet return'd thy love?

Count. Not yet!

Elisabetta. She should return thy necklace then.

Count. Ay, if
She knew the giver; but I bound the seller
To silence, and I left it privily
At Florence, in her palace.

Elisabetta. And sold thine own
To buy it for her. She not know? She knows
There 's none such other —

Count. Madman anywhere.
Speak freely, tho' to call a madman mad
Will hardly help to make him sane again.

Enter FILIPPO

Filippo. Ah, the women, the women! Ah, Monna Giovanna, you here again! you that have the face of an angel and the heart of a — that 's too positive! You that have a score of lovers and have not a heart for any of them — that 's positive-negative: you that have *not* the head of a toad, and *not* a heart like the jewel in it — that 's too negative; you that have a cheek like a peach and a heart like the stone in it — that 's positive again — that 's better!

Elisabetta. Sh — sh — Filippo!

Filippo (*turns half round*). Here has our master

been a-glorifying and a-velveting and a-silking himself, and a-peacocking and a-spreading to catch her eye for a dozen year, till he has n't an eye left in his own tail to flourish among the peahens, and all along o' you, Monna Giovanna, all along o' you!

Elisabetta. Sh — sh — Filippo! Can't you hear that you are saying behind his back what you see you are saying afore his face?

Count. Let him — he never spares me to my face!

Filippo. No, my lord, I never spare your lordship to your lordship's face, nor behind your lordship's back, nor to right, nor to left, nor to round about and back to your lordship's face again, for I 'm honest, your lordship.

Count. Come, come, Filippo, what is there in the larder?

[Elisabetta *crosses to fireplace and puts on wood.*

Filippo. Shelves and hooks, shelves and hooks, and when I see the shelves I am like to hang myself on the hooks.

Count. No bread?

Filippo. Half a breakfast for a rat!

Count. Milk?

Filippo. Three laps for a cat!

Count. Cheese?

Filippo. A supper for twelve mites.

Count. Eggs?

Filippo. One, but addled.

Count. No bird?

Filippo. Half a tit and a hern's bill.

Count. Let be thy jokes and thy jerks, man! Anything or nothing?

Filippo. Well, my lord, if all-but-nothing be anything, and one plate of dried prunes be all-but-nothing, then there is anything in your lordship's larder at your lordship's service, if your lordship care to call for it.

Count. Good mother, happy was the prodigal son,
For he return'd to the rich father; I
But add my poverty to thine. And all
Thro' following of my fancy. Pray thee make
Thy slender meal out of those scraps and shreds
Filippo spoke of. As for him and me,
There sprouts a salad in the garden still.
(*To the Falcon.*) Why didst thou miss thy quarry yester-even?
To-day, my beauty, thou must dash us down
Our dinner from the skies. Away, Filippo!

[*Exit, followed by* Filippo.

Elisabetta. I knew it would come to this. She has beggared him. I always knew it would come to this! (*Goes up to table as if to resume darning, and looks out of window.*) Why, as I live, there is Monna Giovanna coming down the hill from the castle. Stops and stares at our cottage. Ay, ay! stare at it: it 's all you have left us. Shame on you! *She* beautiful! sleek as a miller's mouse! Meal enough, meat enough, well fed; but beauti-

ful — bah! Nay, see, why she turns down the path through our little vineyard, and I sneezed three times this morning. Coming to visit my lord, for the first time in her life too! Why, bless the saints! I'll be bound to confess her love to him at last. I forgive her, I forgive her! I knew it would come to this — I always knew it must come to this! (*Goes up to door during latter part of speech, and opens it.*) Come in, madonna, come in. (*Retires to front of table and curtseys as the* LADY GIOVANNA *enters, then moves chair towards the hearth.*) Nay, let me place this chair for your ladyship.

[Lady Giovanna *moves slowly down stage, then crosses to chair, looking about her, bows as she sees the Madonna over fireplace, then sits in chair.*

Lady Giovanna. Can I speak with the Count?

Elisabetta. Ay, my lady, but won't you speak with the old woman first, and tell her all about it and make her happy? for I've been on my knees every day for these half-dozen years in hope that the saints would send us this blessed morning; and he always took you so kindly, he always took the world so kindly. When he was a little one, and I put the bitters on my breast to wean him, he made a wry mouth at it, but he took it so kindly, and your ladyship has given him bitters enough in this world, and he never made a wry mouth at you, he always took you so kindly — which is more than I did,

my lady, more than I did — and he so handsome — and bless your sweet face, you look as beautiful this morning as the very Madonna her own self — and better late than never — but come when they will — then or now — it 's all for the best, come when they will — they are made by the blessed saints — these marriages. [*Raises her hands.*

Lady Giovanna. Marriages? I shall never marry again!

Elisabetta (*rises and turns*). Shame on her then!

Lady Giovanna. Where is the Count?

Elisabetta. Just gone
To fly his falcon.

Lady Giovanna. Call him back and say
I come to breakfast with him.

Elisabetta. Holy mother!
To breakfast! O sweet saints! one plate of prunes!
Well, madam, I will give your message to him.
[*Exit.*

Lady Giovanna. His falcon, and I come to ask for his falcon,
The pleasure of his eyes — boast of his hand —
Pride of his heart — the solace of his hours —
His one companion here — nay, I have heard
That, thro' his late magnificence of living
And this last costly gift to mine own self,
[*Shows diamond necklace.*
He hath become so beggar'd that his falcon

Even wins his dinner for him in the field.
That must be talk, not truth, but, truth or talk,
How can I ask for his falcon?

[*Rises and moves as she speaks.*

O my sick boy!
My daily fading Florio, it is thou
Hath set me this hard task, for when I say,
What can I do — what can I get for thee?
He answers, 'Get the Count to give me his falcon,
And that will make me well.' Yet if I ask,
He loves me, and he knows I know he loves me!
Will he not pray me to return his love —
To marry him? — (*pause*) — I can never marry him.
His grandsire struck my grandsire in a brawl
At Florence, and my grandsire stabb'd him there.
The feud between our houses is the bar
I cannot cross; I dare not brave my brother,
Break with my kin. My brother hates him, scorns
The noblest-natured man alive, and I —
Who have that reverence for him that I scarce
Dare beg him to receive his diamonds back —
How can I, dare I, ask him for his falcon?

[*Puts diamonds in her casket.*

Re-enter COUNT *and* FILIPPO. COUNT *turns to* FILIPPO

Count. Do what I said; I cannot do it myself.

Filippo. Why then, my lord, we are pauper'd out and out.

Count. Do what I said! [*Advances and bows low.*
Welcome to this poor cottage, my dear lady.

Lady Giovanna. And welcome turns a cottage to a palace.

Count. 'T is long since we have met!

Lady Giovanna. To make amends
I come this day to break my fast with you.

Count. I am much honor'd — yes —
[*Turns to Filippo.*
Do what I told thee. Must I do it myself?

Filippo. I will, I will. (*Sighs.*) Poor fellow!
[*Exit.*

Count. Lady, you bring your light into my cottage
Who never deign'd to shine into my palace.
My palace wanting you was but a cottage;
My cottage, while you grace it, is a palace.

Lady Giovanna. In cottage or in palace, being still
Beyond your fortunes, you are still the king
Of courtesy and liberality.

Count. I trust I still maintain my courtesy;
My liberality perforce is dead
Thro' lack of means of giving.

Lady Giovanna. Yet I come
To ask a gift. [*Moves toward him a little.*

Count. It will be hard, I fear,
To find one shock upon the field when all
The harvest has been carried.

Lady Giovanna. But my boy —
(*Aside.*) No, no! not yet — I cannot!
Count. Ay, how is he,
That bright inheritor of your eyes — your boy?
Lady Giovanna. Alas, my Lord Federigo, he hath fallen
Into a sickness, and it troubles me.
Count. Sick! is it so? why, when he came last year
To see me hawking, he was well enough;
And then I taught him all our hawking-phrases.
Lady Giovanna. O yes, and once you let him fly your falcon.
Count. How charm'd he was! what wonder? — A gallant boy,
A noble bird, each perfect of the breed.
Lady Giovanna (*sinks in chair*). What do you rate her at?
Count. My bird? a hundred
Gold pieces once were offer'd by the Duke.
I had no heart to part with her for money.
Lady Giovanna. No, not for money.
[Count *turns away and sighs.*
Wherefore do you sigh?
Count. I have lost a friend of late.
Lady Giovanna. I could sigh with you
For fear of losing more than friend, a son;
And if he leave me — all the rest of life —
That wither'd wreath were of more worth to me.
[*Looking at wreath on wall.*

Count. That wither'd wreath is of more worth to me
Than all the blossom, all the leaf of this
New-wakening year.

[*Goes and takes down wreath.*

Lady Giovanna. And yet I never saw
The land so rich in blossom as this year.

Count (*holding wreath toward her*). Was not the year when this was gather'd richer?

Lady Giovanna. How long ago was that?

Count. Alas, ten summers!
A lady that was beautiful as day
Sat by me at a rustic festival
With other beauties on a mountain meadow,
And she was the most beautiful of all;
Then but fifteen, and still as beautiful.
The mountain flowers grew thickly round about.
I made a wreath with some of these; I ask'd
A ribbon from her hair to bind it with;
I whisper'd, Let me crown you Queen of Beauty,
And softly placed the chaplet on her head.
A color, which has color'd all my life,
Flush'd in her face; then I was call'd away;
And presently all rose, and so departed.
Ah! she had thrown my chaplet on the grass,
And there I found it.

[*Lets his hands fall, holding wreath despondingly.*

Lady Giovanna (*after pause*). How long since do you say?

Count. That was the very year before you married.

Lady Giovanna. When I was married you were at the wars.

Count. Had she not thrown my chaplet on the grass,
It may be I had never seen the wars.

[*Replaces wreath whence he had taken it.*

Lady Giovanna. Ah, but, my lord, there ran a rumor then
That you were kill'd in battle. I can tell you
True tears that year were shed for you in Florence.

Count. It might have been as well for me. Unhappily
I was but wounded by the enemy there
And then imprison'd.

Lady Giovanna. Happily, however,
I see you quite recover'd of your wound.

Count. No, no, not quite, madonna, not yet, not yet.

Re-enter FILIPPO

Filippo. My lord, a word with you.

Count. Pray, pardon me!

[Lady Giovanna *crosses, and passes behind chair and takes down wreath; then goes to chair by table.*

Count (*to* Filippo). What is it, Filippo?

Filippo. Spoons, your lordship.

Count. Spoons!

Filippo. Yes, my lord, for was n't my lady born with a golden spoon in her ladyship's mouth, and we have n't never so much as a silver one for the golden lips of her ladyship.

Count. Have we not half a score of silver spoons?

Filippo. Half o' one, my lord!

Count. How half of one?

Filippo. I trod upon him even now, my lord, in my hurry, and broke him.

Count. And the other nine?

Filippo. Sold! but shall I not mount with your lordship's leave to her ladyship's castle, in your lordship's and her ladyship's name, and confer with her ladyship's seneschal, and so descend again with some of her ladyship's own appurtenances?

Count. Why — no, man. Only see your cloth be clean. [*Exit* Filippo.

Lady Giovanna. Ay, ay, this faded ribbon was the mode
In Florence ten years back. What's here? a scroll
Pinned to the wreath.
My lord, you have said so much
Of this poor wreath that I was bold enough
To take it down, if but to guess what flowers
Had made it; and I find a written scroll
That seems to run in rhymings. Might I read?

Count. Ay, if you will.

Lady Giovanna. It should be if you can.
(*Reads.*) 'Dead mountain.' Nay, for who could
trace a hand
So wild and staggering?
Count. This was penn'd, madonna,
Close to the grating on a winter morn
In the perpetual twilight of a prison,
When he that made it, having his right hand
Lamed in the battle, wrote it with his left.
Lady Giovanna. O heavens! the very letters
seem to shake
With cold, with pain perhaps, poor prisoner!
Well,
Tell me the words — or better — for I see
There goes a musical score along with them,
Repeat them to their music.
Count. You can touch
No chord in me that would not answer you
In music.
Lady Giovanna. That is musically said.
[Count *takes guitar.* Lady Giovanna *sits listening with wreath in her hand, and quietly removes scroll and places it on table at the end of the song.*
Count (*sings, playing guitar*). 'Dead mountain
flowers, dead mountain-meadow flowers,
Dearer than when you made your mountain gay,
Sweeter than any violet of to-day,
Richer than all the wide world-wealth of May,

To me, tho' all your bloom has died away,
You bloom again, dead mountain-meadow flowers.'

Enter ELISABETTA *with cloth*

Elisabetta. A word with you, my lord!

Count (*singing*). 'O mountain flowers!'

Elisabetta (*louder*). A word, my lord!

Count (*sings*). 'Dead flowers!'

Elisabetta (*louder*). A word, my lord!

Count. I pray you pardon me again!

[Lady Giovanna *looking at wreath.*

Count (*to* Elisabetta). What is it?

Elisabetta. My lord, we have but one piece of earthen-ware to serve the salad in to my lady, and that cracked!

Count. Why then, that flower'd bowl my ancestor
Fetch'd from the farthest east — we never use it
For fear of breakage — but this day has brought
A great occasion. You can take it, nurse!

Elisabetta. I did take it, my lord, but what with my lady's coming that had so flurried me, and what with the fear of breaking it, I did break it, my lord; it is broken!

Count. My one thing left of value in the world! No matter! see your cloth be white as snow!

Elisabetta (*pointing thro' window*). White? I warrant thee, my son, as the snow yonder on the very tip-top o' the mountain.

Count. And yet, to speak white truth, my good
old mother,
I have seen it like the snow on the moraine.
Elisabetta. How can your lordship say so? There,
my lord! [*Lays cloth.*
O my dear son, be not unkind to me.
And one word more. [*Going — returns.*
Count (*touching guitar*). Good! let it be but one.
Elisabetta. Hath she return'd thy love?
Count. Not yet!
Elisabetta. And will she?
Count (*looking at* Lady Giovanna). I scarce believe it!
Elisabetta. Shame upon her then!
[*Exit.*
Count (*sings*). 'Dead mountain flowers' —
Ah well, my nurse has broken
The thread of my dead flowers, as she has broken
My china bowl. My memory is as dead.
[*Goes and replaces guitar.*
Strange that the words at home with me so long
Should fly like bosom friends when needed most.
So by your leave, if you would hear the rest,
The writing.
Lady Giovanna (*holding wreath toward him*).
There! my lord, you are a poet,
And can you not imagine that the wreath,
Set, as you say, so lightly on her head,
Fell with her motion as she rose, and she,

A girl, a child, then but fifteen, however
Flutter'd or flatter'd by your notice of her,
Was yet too bashful to return for it?

Count. Was it so indeed? was it so? was it so?

[*Leans forward to take wreath, and touches* Lady Giovanna's *hand, which she withdraws hastily; he places wreath on corner of chair.*

Lady Giovanna (*with dignity*). I did not say, my lord, that it was so;
I said you might imagine it was so.

Enter FILIPPO *with bowl of salad, which he places on table*

Filippo. Here 's a fine salad for my lady, for tho' we have been a soldier, and ridden by his lordship's side, and seen the red of the battle-field, yet are we now drill-sergeant to his lordship's lettuces, and profess to be great in green things and in garden-stuff.

Lady Giovanna. I thank thee, good Filippo.

[*Exit* Filippo.

Enter ELISABETTA *with bird on a dish which she places on table*

Elisabetta (*close to table*). Here 's a fine fowl for my lady; I had scant time to do him in. I hope he be not underdone, for we be undone in the doing of him.

Lady Giovanna. I thank you, my good nurse.

Filippo (*re-entering with plate of prunes*). And

here are fine fruits for my lady — prunes, my lady, from the tree that my lord himself planted here in the blossom of his boyhood — and so I, Filippo, being, with your ladyship's pardon, and as your ladyship knows, his lordship's own foster-brother, would commend them to your ladyship's most peculiar appreciation. [*Puts plate on table.*

Elisabetta. Filippo!

Lady Giovanna (Count *leads her to table*). Will you not eat with me, my lord?

Count. I cannot;
Not a morsel, not one morsel. I have broken
My fast already. I will pledge you. Wine!
Filippo, wine!

[*Sits near table;* Filippo *brings flask, fills the* Count's *goblet, then* Lady Giovanna's; Elisabetta *stands at the back of* Lady Giovanna's *chair.*

Count. It is but thin and cold,
Not like the vintage blowing round your castle.
We lie too deep down in the shadow here.
Your ladyship lives higher in the sun.

[*They pledge each other and drink.*

Lady Giovanna. If I might send you down a flask or two
Of that same vintage? There is iron in it.
It has been much commended as a medicine.
I give it my sick son, and if you be
Not quite recover'd of your wound, the wine

Might help you. None has ever told me yet
The story of your battle and your wound.

Filippo (*coming forward*). I can tell you, my lady, I can tell you.

Elisabetta. Filippo! will you take the word out of your master's own mouth?

Filippo. Was it there to take? Put it there, my lord.

Count. Giovanna, my dear lady, in this same battle
We had been beaten — they were ten to one.
The trumpets of the fight had echo'd down,
I and Filippo here had done our best,
And, having passed unwounded from the field,
Were seated sadly at a fountain side,
Our horses grazing by us, when a troop,
Laden with booty and with a flag of ours
Ta'en in the fight —

Filippo. Ay, but we fought for it back,
And kill'd —

Elisabetta. Filippo!

Count. A troop of horse —

Filippo. Five hundred!

Count. Say fifty!

Filippo. And we kill'd 'em by the score!

Elisabetta. Filippo!

Filippo. Well, well, well! I bite my tongue.

Count. We may have left their fifty less by five.
However, staying not to count how many,

But anger'd at their flaunting of our flag,
We mounted, and we dash'd into the heart of 'em.
I wore the lady's chaplet round my neck;
It served me for a blessed rosary.
I am sure that more than one brave fellow owed
His death to the charm in it.

Elisabetta. Hear that, my lady!

Count. I cannot tell how long we strove before
Our horses fell beneath us; down we went
Crush'd, hack'd at, trampled under foot. The night,
As some cold-manner'd friend may strangely do us
The truest service, had a touch of frost
That help'd to check the flowing of the blood.
My last sight ere I swoon'd was one sweet face
Crown'd with the wreath. *That* seem'd to come and go.
They left us there for dead!

Elisabetta. Hear that, my lady!

Filippo. Ay, and I left two fingers there for dead. See, my lady! (*Showing his hand.*)

Lady Giovanna. I see, Filippo!

Filippo. And I have small hope of the gentleman gout in my great toe.

Lady Giovanna. And why, Filippo? [*Smiling absently.*

Filippo. I left him there for dead too.

Elisabetta. She smiles at him — how hard the woman is!

My lady, if your ladyship were not
Too proud to look upon the garland, you
Would find it stain'd —

Count (*rising*). Silence, Elisabetta!

Elizabetta. Stain'd with the blood of the best heart that ever
Beat for one woman. [*Points to wreath on chair.*

Lady Giovanna (*rising slowly*). I can eat no more!

Count. You have but trifled with our homely salad,
But dallied with a single lettuce-leaf;
Not eaten anything.

Lady Giovanna. Nay, nay, I cannot.
You know, my lord, I told you I was troubled.
My one child Florio lying still so sick,
I bound myself, and by a solemn vow,
That I would touch no flesh till he were well
Here, or else well in heaven, where all is well.

[Elisabetta *clears table of bird and salad:* Filippo *snatches up the plate of prunes and holds them to* Lady Giovanna.

Filippo. But the prunes, my lady, from the tree that his lordship —

Lady Giovanna. Not now, Filippo. My lord Federigo,
Can I not speak with you once more alone?

Count. You hear, Filippo? My good fellow, go.

Filippo. But the prunes that your lordship —

Elisabetta. Filippo!

Count. Ay, prune our company of thine own, and go!

Elisabetta. Filippo!

Filippo (*turning*). Well, well! the women! [*Exit.*

Count. And thou too leave us, my dear nurse, alone.

Elisabetta (*folding up cloth and going*). And me too! Ay, the dear nurse will leave you alone; but, for all that, she that has eaten the yolk is scarce like to swallow the shell.

[*Turns and curtseys stiffly to* Lady Giovanna, *then exit.* Lady Giovanna *takes out diamond necklace from casket.*

Lady Giovanna. I have anger'd your good nurse; these old-world servants
Are all but flesh and blood with those they serve.
My lord, I have a present to return you,
And afterwards a boon to crave of you.

Count. No, my most honor'd and long-worshipt lady,
Poor Federigo degli Alberighi
Takes nothing in return from you except
Return of his affection — can deny
Nothing to you that you require of him.

Lady Giovanna. Then I require you to take back your diamonds — [*Offering necklace.*
I doubt not they are yours. No other heart
Of such magnificence in courtesy

Beats — out of heaven. They seem'd too rich a prize
To trust with any messenger. I came
In person to return them. [Count *draws back*.
If the phrase
'Return' displease you, we will say — exchange them.
For your — for your —

Count (*takes a step toward her and then back*). For mine — and what of mine?

Lady Giovanna. Well, shall we say this wreath and your sweet rhymes?

Count. But have you ever worn my diamonds?

Lady Giovanna. No!
For that would seem accepting of your love.
I cannot brave my brother — but be sure
That I shall never marry again, my lord!

Count. Sure?

Lady Giovanna. Yes!

Count. Is this your brother's order?

Lady Giovanna. No!
For he would marry me to the richest man
In Florence; but I think you know the saying —
'Better a man without riches, than riches without a man.'

Count. A noble saying — and acted on would yield
A nobler breed of men and women. Lady,
I find you a shrewd bargainer. The wreath

That once you wore outvalues twenty-fold
The diamonds that you never deign'd to wear.
But lay them there for a moment!

[*Points to table.* Lady Giovanna *places neck-lace on table.*

And be you
Gracious enough to let me know the boon
By granting which, if aught be mine to grant,
I should be made more happy than I hoped
Ever to be again.

Lady Giovanna. Then keep your wreath,
But you will find me a shrewd bargainer still.
I cannot keep your diamonds, for the gift
I ask for, to *my* mind and at this present
Outvalues all the jewels upon earth.

Count. It should be love that thus outvalues all.
You speak like love, and yet you love me not.
I have nothing in this world but love for you.

Lady Giovanna. Love? it *is* love, love for my dying boy,
Moves me to ask it of you.

Count. What? my time?
Is it my time? Well, I can give my time
To him that is a part of you, your son.
Shall I return to the castle with you? Shall I
Sit by him, read to him, tell him my tales,
Sing him my songs? You know that I can touch
The gittern to some purpose.

Lady Giovanna. No, not that!

I thank you heartily for that — and you,
I doubt not from your nobleness of nature,
Will pardon me for asking what I ask.

Count. Giovanna, dear Giovanna, I that once
The wildest of the random youth of Florence
Before I saw you — all my nobleness
Of nature, as you deign to call it, draws
From you, and from my constancy to you.
No more, but speak.

Lady Giovanna. I will. You know sick people,
More specially sick children, have strange fancies,
Strange longings; and to thwart them in their mood
May work them grievous harm at times, may even
Hasten their end. I would you had a son!
It might be easier then for you to make
Allowance for a mother — her — who comes
To rob you of your one delight on earth.
How often has my sick boy yearn'd for this!
I have put him off as often; but to-day
I dared not — so much weaker, so much worse
For last day's journey. I was weeping for him;
He gave me his hand: 'I should be well again
If the good Count would give me —'

Count. Give me —

Lady Giovanna. 'His falcon.'

Count (*starts back*). My falcon!

Lady Giovanna. Yes, your falcon, Federigo!

Count. Alas, I cannot!

Lady Giovanna. Cannot? Even so!

I fear'd as much. O this unhappy world!
How shall I break it to him? how shall I tell him?
The boy may die; more blessed were the rags
Of some pale beggar-woman seeking alms
For her sick son, if he were like to live,
Than all my childless wealth, if mine must die.
I was to blame — the love you said you bore me —
My lord, we thank you for your entertainment,
[*With a stately curtsey.*
And so return — Heaven help him! — to our son.
[*Turns.*

Count (*rushes forward*). Stay, stay, I am most unlucky, most unhappy!
You never had look'd in on me before,
And when you came and dipt your sovereign head
Thro' these low doors, you ask'd to eat with me.
I had but emptiness to set before you,
No, not a draught of milk, no, not an egg,
Nothing but my brave bird, my noble falcon,
My comrade of the house, and of the field.
She had to die for it — she died for you.
Perhaps I thought with those of old, the nobler
The victim was, the more acceptable
Might be the sacrifice. I fear you scarce
Will thank me for your entertainment now.

Lady Giovanna (*returning*). I bear with him no longer.

Count. No, madonna!
And he will have to bear with it as he may.

Lady Giovanna. I break with him for ever!
Count. Yes, Giovanna,
But he will keep his love to you for ever!
Lady Giovanna. You? you? not you! My brother! my hard brother!
O Federigo, Federigo, I love you!
Spite of ten thousand brothers, Federigo!
[*Falls at his feet.*
Count (*impetuously*). Why, then the dying of my noble bird
Hath served me better than her living — then
[*Takes diamonds from table.*
These diamonds are both yours and mine — have won
Their value again — beyond all markets — there,
I lay them for the first time round your neck.
[*Lays necklace round her neck.*
And then this chaplet — No more feuds, but peace,
Peace and conciliation! I will make
Your brother love me. See, I tear away
The leaves were darken'd by the battle —
[*Pulls leaves off and throws them down.*
— crown you
Again with the same crown my Queen of Beauty.
[*Places wreath on her head.*
Rise — I could almost think that the dead garland
Will break once more into the living blossom.
Nay, nay, I pray you rise.
[*Raises her with both hands.*

We two together
Will help to heal your son — your son and mine —
We shall do it — we shall do it! [*Embraces her.*
The purpose of my being is accomplish'd,
And I am happy!

Lady Giovanna. And I too, Federigo.

THE CUP

A TRAGEDY

1880

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

SYNORIX, *an ex-Tetrarch*	GALATIANS.
SINNATUS, *a Tetrarch*	
Attendant	
Boy	
ANTONIUS, *a Roman General*	ROMÁNS.
PUBLIUS	

PHŒBE.

CAMMA, *wifé of Sinnatus, afterwards Priestess in the Temple of Artemis.*

Maid.

Nobleman.

Messenger.

THE CUP

A TRAGEDY

ACT I

Scene I. — Distant View of a City of Galatia

As the curtain rises, Priestesses are heard singing in the Temple. Boy discovered on a pathway among Rocks, picking grapes. A party of Roman Soldiers, guarding a prisoner in chains, come down the pathway and exeunt

Enter Synorix (*looking round*). *Singing ceases*

Synorix. Pine, beech and plane, oak, walnut, apricot,
Vine, cypress, poplar, myrtle, bowering-in
The city where she dwells. She past me here
Three years ago when I was flying from
My tetrarchy to Rome. I almost touch'd her —
A maiden slowly moving on to music
Among her maidens to this temple — O Gods!
She is my fate — else wherefore has my fate
Brought me again to her own city? — married
Since — married Sinnatus, the tetrarch here —

But if he be conspirator, Rome will chain
Or slay him. I may trust to gain her then
When I shall have my tetrarchy restored
By Rome, our mistress, grateful that I show'd
her
The weakness and the dissonance of our clans,
And how to crush them easily. Wretched race!
And once I wish'd to scourge them to the bones.
But in this narrow breathing-time of life
Is vengeance for its own sake worth the while,
If once our ends are gain'd? and now this cup —
I never felt such passion for a woman.

[*Brings out a cup and scroll from under his cloak.*

What have I written to her? [*Reading the scroll.*

'To the admired Camma, wife of Sinnatus the Tetrarch, one who years ago, himself an adorer of our great goddess Artemis, beheld you afar off worshipping in her temple, and loved you for it, sends you this cup rescued from the burning of one of her shrines in a city thro' which he past with the Roman army: it is the cup we use in our marriages. Receive it from one who cannot at present write himself other than

'A Galatian serving by force in
the Roman Legion.'

[*Turns and looks up to Boy.*

Boy, dost thou know the house of Sinnatus?

Boy. These grapes are for the house of Sinnatus —
Close to the temple.
Synorix. Yonder?
Boy. Yes.
Synorix (*aside*). That I
With all my range of women should yet shun
To meet her face to face at once! My boy,
[*Boy comes down rocks to him.*
Take thou this letter and this cup to Camma,
The wife of Sinnatus.
Boy. Going or gone to-day
To hunt with Sinnatus.
Synorix. That matters not.
Take thou this cup and leave it at her doors.
[*Gives the cup and scroll to the Boy.*
Boy. I will, my lord.
[*Takes his basket of grapes and exit.*

Enter ANTONIUS

Antonius (*meeting the Boy as he goes out*). Why, whither runs the boy?
Is that the cup you rescued from the fire?
Synorix. I send it to the wife of Sinnatus,
One half besotted in religious rites.
You come here with your soldiers to enforce
The long-withholden tribute; you suspect
This Sinnatus of playing patriotism,
Which in your sense is treason. You have yet

No proof against him. Now this pious cup
Is passport to their house, and open arms
To him who gave it; and once there I warrant
I worm thro' all their windings.

Antonius. If you prosper,
Our Senate, wearied of their tetrarchies,
Their quarrels with themselves, their spites at Rome,
Is like enough to cancel them, and throne
One king above them all, who shall be true
To the Roman; and from what I heard in Rome,
This tributary crown may fall to you.

Synorix. The king, the crown! their talk in Rome? is it so? [Antonius *nods.*
Well — I shall serve Galatia taking it,
And save her from herself, and be to Rome
More faithful than a Roman.
[*Turns and sees* Camma *coming.*
Stand aside,
Stand aside; here she comes!
[*Watching* Camma *as she enters with her Maid.*

Camma (*to Maid*). Where is he, girl?

Maid. You know the waterfall
That in the summer keeps the mountain side,
But after rain o'erleaps a jutting rock
And shoots three hundred feet.

Camma. The stag is there?

Maid. Seen in the thicket at the bottom there
But yester-even.

Camma. Good then, we will climb
The mountain opposite and watch the chase.

[*They descend the rocks and exeunt.*

Synorix (*watching her*). (*Aside.*) The bust of Juno, and the brows and eyes
Of Venus; face and form unmatchable!

Antonius. Why do you look at her so lingeringly?

Synorix. To see if years have changed her.

Antonius (*sarcastically*). Love her, do you?

Synorix. I envied Sinnatus when he married her.

Antonius. She knows it? Ha!

Synorix. She — no, nor even my face.

Antonius. Nor Sinnatus either?

Synorix. No, nor Sinnatus.

Antonius. Hot-blooded! I have heard them say in Rome,
That your own people cast you from their bounds
For some unprincely violence to a woman,
As Rome did Tarquin.

Synorix. Well, if this were so
I here return like Tarquin — for a crown.

Antonius. And may be foil'd like Tarquin, if you follow
Not the dry light of Rome's straight-going policy,
But the fool-fire of love or lust, which well

May make you lose yourself, may even drown you
In the good regard of Rome.

Synorix. Tut — fear me not;
I ever had my victories among women.
I am most true to Rome.

Antonius (*aside*). I hate the man!
What filthy tools our Senate works with! Still
I must obey them. (*Aloud.*) Fare you well.
[*Going.*

Synorix. Farewell!

Antonius (*stopping*). A moment! If you track this Sinnatus
In any treason, I give you here an order
[*Produces a paper.*
To seize upon him. Let me sign it. (*Signs it.*) There —
'Antonius, leader of the Roman Legion.'
[*Hands the paper to* Synorix. *Goes up pathway and exit.*

Synorix. Woman again! — but I am wiser now.
No rushing on the game, — the net, — the net.
[*Shouts of* 'Sinnatus! Sinnatus!' *Then horn.*
(*Looking off stage.*) He comes, a rough, bluff, simple-looking fellow.
If we may judge the kernel by the husk,
Not one to keep a woman's fealty when
Assailed by Craft and Love. I'll join with him;
I may reap something from him — come upon *her*

Again, perhaps, to-day — *her*. Who are with him?
I see no face that knows me. Shall I risk it?
I am a Roman now, they dare not touch me.
I will.

Enter SINNATUS, HUNTSMEN *and hounds*

Fair sir, a happy day to you!
You reck but little of the Roman here,
While you can take your pastime in the woods.

Sinnatus. Ay, ay, why not? What would you with me, man?

Synorix. I am a lifelong lover of the chase,
And tho' a stranger fain would be allow'd
To join the hunt.

Sinnatus. Your name?

Synorix. Strato, my name.

Sinnatus. No Roman name?

Synorix. A Greek, my lord; you know
That we Galatians are both Greek and Gaul.

[*Shouts and horns in the distance.*

Sinnatus. Hillo, the stag! (*To* Synorix.) What, you are all unfurnish'd?
Give him a bow and arrows — follow — follow.

[*Exit, followed by Huntsmen.*

Synorix. Slowly but surely — till I see my way.
It is the one step in the dark beyond
Our expectation, that amazes us.

[*Distant shouts and horns.*

Hillo! Hillo! [*Exit* Synorix. *Shouts and horns.*

Scene II

A Room in the Tetrarch's House

Frescoed figures on the walls. Evening. Moonlight outside. A couch with cushions on it. A small table with a flagon of wine, cups, plate of grapes, etc., also the cup of Scene I. A chair with drapery on it

Camma *enters, and opens curtains of window*

Camma. No Sinnatus yet — and there the rising moon.

[*Takes up a cither and sits on couch. Plays and sings.*

Moon on the field and the foam,
  Moon on the waste and the wold,
Moon bring him home, bring him home,
  Safe from the dark and the cold,
Home, sweet moon, bring him home,
  Home with the flock to the fold —
Safe from the wolf —

(*Listening.*) Is he coming? I thought I heard
A footstep. No, not yet. They say that Rome
Sprang from a wolf. I fear my dear lord mixt
With some conspiracy against the wolf.
This mountain shepherd never dream'd of Rome.
[*Sings.*

Safe from the wolf to the fold —

And that great break of precipice that runs
Thro' all the wood, where twenty years ago
Huntsman and hound and deer were all neck-
broken!
Nay, here he comes.

Enter SINNATUS *followed by* SYNORIX

Sinnatus (*angrily*). I tell thee, my good fellow,
My arrow struck the stag.

Synorix. But was it so?
Nay, you were further off; besides the wind
Went with *my* arrow.

Sinnatus. I am sure *I* struck him.

Synorix. And I am just as sure, my lord, *I* struck
him.
(*Aside.*) And I may strike your game when you are
gone.

Camma. Come, come, we will not quarrel about
the stag.
I have had a weary day in watching you.
Yours must have been a wearier. Sit and eat,
And take a hunter's vengeance on the meats.

Sinnatus. No, no — we have eaten — we are
heated. Wine!

Camma. Who is our guest?

Sinnatus. Strato he calls himself.

[Camma *offers wine to* Synorix, *while* Sinnatus
helps himself.

Sinnatus. I pledge you, Strato. [*Drinks.*

Synorix. And I you, my lord.
[*Drinks.*

Sinnatus (*seeing the cup sent to* Camma). What's here?

Camma. A strange gift sent to me to-day.
A sacred cup saved from a blazing shrine
Of our great Goddess, in some city where
Antonius past. I had believed that Rome
Made war upon the peoples, not the Gods.

Synorix. Most like the city rose against Antonius,
Whereon he fired it, and the sacred shrine
By chance was burnt along with it.

Sinnatus. Had you then
No message with the cup?

Camma. Why, yes, see here.
[*Gives him the scroll.*

Sinnatus (*reads*). 'To the admired Camma, — beheld you afar off — loved you — sends you this cup — the cup we use in our marriages — cannot at present write himself other than

'A Galatian serving by force in the Roman Legion'

Serving by force! Were there no boughs to hang on,
Rivers to drown in? Serve by force? No force
Could make me serve by force.

Synorix. How then, my lord?
The Roman is encampt without your city —
The force of Rome a thousand-fold our own.

Must all Galatia hang or drown herself?
And you a prince and tetrarch in this province —
Sinnatus. Province!
Synorix. Well, well, they call it so in Rome.
Sinnatus (*angrily*). Province!
Synorix. A noble anger! but Antonius
To-morrow will demand your tribute — you,
Can you make war? Have you alliances?
Bithynia, Pontus, Paphlagonia?
We have had our leagues of old with Eastern kings.
There is my hand — if such a league there be.
What will you do?
Sinnatus. Not set myself abroach
And run my mind out to a random guest
Who join'd me in the hunt. You saw my hounds
True to the scent; and we have two-legg'd dogs
Among us who can smell a true occasion,
And when to bark and how.
Synorix. My good Lord Sinnatus,
I once was at the hunting of a lion.
Roused by the clamor of the chase he woke,
Came to the front of the wood — his monarch mane
Bristled about his quick ears — he stood there
Staring upon the hunter. A score of dogs
Gnaw'd at his ankles; at the last he felt
The trouble of his feet, put forth one paw,
Slew four, and knew it not, and so remain'd
Staring upon the hunter. And this Rome

Will crush you if you wrestle with her; then,
Save for some slight report in her own Senate,
Scarce know what she has done.
(*Aside.*) Would I could move him,
Provoke him any way! (*Aloud.*) The Lady Camma,
Wise I am sure as she is beautiful,
Will close with me that to submit at once
Is better than a wholly hopeless war,
Our gallant citizens murder'd all in vain,
Son, husband, brother gash'd to death in vain,
And the small state more cruelly trampled on
Than had she never moved.

Camma. Sir, I had once
A boy who died a babe; but were he living
And grown to man and Sinnatus will'd it, I
Would set him in the front rank of the fight
With scarce a pang. (*Rises.*) Sir, if a state submit
At once, she may be blotted out at once
And swallow'd in the conqueror's chronicle.
Whereas in wars of freedom and defence
The glory and grief of battle won or lost
Solders a race together — yea — tho' they fail,
The names of those who fought and fell are like
A bank'd-up fire that flashes out again
From century to century, and at last
May lead them on to victory — I hope so —
Like phantoms of the Gods.

Sinnatus. Well spoken, wife.

Synorix (*bowing*). Madam, so well I yield.

Sinnatus. I should not wonder
If Synorix, who has dwelt three years in Rome
And wrought his worst against his native land,
Returns with this Antonius.

Synorix. What is Synorix?

Sinnatus. Galatian, and not know? This Synorix
Was tetrarch here, and tyrant also — did
Dishonor to our wives.

Synorix. Perhaps you judge him
With feeble charity; being as you tell me
Tetrarch, there might be willing wives enough
To feel dishonor honor.

Camma. Do not say so.
I know of no such wives in all Galatia.
There may be courtesans for aught I know
Whose life is one dishonor.

Enter ATTENDANT

Attendant (*aside*). My lord, the men!

Sinnatus (*aside*). Our anti-Roman faction?

Attendant (*aside*). Ay, my lord.

Synorix (*overhearing*). (*Aside.*) I have enough — their anti-Roman faction.

Sinnatus (*aloud*). Some friends of mine would speak with me without.
You, Strato, make good cheer till I return. [*Exit.*

Synorix. I have much to say, no time to say it in.

First, lady, know myself am that Galatian
Who sent the cup.

Camma. I thank you from my heart.

Synorix. Then that I serve with Rome to serve Galatia.

That is my secret; keep it, or you sell me
To torment and to death. [*Coming closer.*
For your ear only —
I love you — for your love to the great Goddess.
The Romans sent me here a spy upon you,
To draw you and your husband to your doom.
I'd sooner die than do it.
[*Takes out paper given him by* Antonius.
This paper sign'd
Antonius — will you take it, read it? there!

Camma (*reads*). 'You are to seize on Sinnatus, — if —'

Synorix (*snatches paper*). No more.
What follows is for no wife's eyes. O Camma,
Rome has a glimpse of this conspiracy;
Rome never yet hath spar'd conspirator.
Horrible! flaying, scourging, crucifying —

Camma. I am tender enough. Why do you practise on me?

Synorix. Why should I practise on you? How you wrong me!
I am sure of being every way malign'd.
And if you should betray me to your husband —

Camma. Will *you* betray him by this order?

Synorix. See,
I tear it all to pieces, never dream'd
Of acting on it. [*Tears the paper.*

Camma. I owe you thanks for ever.

Synorix. Hath Sinnatus never told you of this plot?

Camma. What plot?

Synorix. A child's sand-castle on the beach
For the next wave, — all seen, — all calculated,
All known by Rome. No chance for Sinnatus.

Camma. Why said you not as much to my brave Sinnatus?

Synorix. Brave — ay — too brave, too over-confident,
Too like to ruin himself, and you, and me!
Who else, with this black thunderbolt of Rome
Above him, would have chased the stag to-day
In the full face of all the Roman camp?
A miracle that they let him home again,
Not caught, maim'd, blinded him. [Camma *shudders.*
(*Aside.*) I have made her tremble.
(*Aloud.*) I know they mean to torture him to death.
I dare not tell him how I came to know it;
I durst not trust him with — my serving Rome
To serve Galatia; you heard him on the letter.
Not say as much? I all but said as much.
I am sure I told him that his plot was folly.
I say it to you — you are wiser — Rome knows all,
But you know not the savagery of Rome.

Camma. O! — have you power with Rome? use it for him!

Synorix. Alas! I have no such power with Rome. All that
Lies with Antonius.

[*As if struck by a sudden thought. Comes over to her.*

He will pass to-morrow
In the gray dawn before the temple doors.
You have beauty, — O, great beauty, — and Antonius,
So gracious toward women, never yet
Flung back a woman's prayer. Plead to him,
I am sure you will prevail.

Camma. Still — I should tell
My husband.

Synorix. Will he let you plead for him
To a Roman?

Camma. I fear not.

Synorix. Then do not tell him.
Or tell him, if you will, when you return,
When you have charm'd our general into mercy,
And all is safe again. O dearest lady,

[*Murmurs of* 'Synorix! Synorix!' *heard outside.*

Think, — torture, — death, — and come.

Camma. I will, I will.
And I will not betray you.

Synorix (*aside*, *as* Sinnatus *enters*). Stand apart.

Enter SINNATUS *and* ATTENDANT

Sinnatus. Thou art that Synorix! One whom thou hast wrong'd
Without there knew thee with Antonius.
They howl for thee, to rend thee head from limb.

Synorix. I am much malign'd. I thought to serve Galatia.

Sinnatus. Serve thyself first, villain! They shall not harm
My guest within my house. There! (*points to door*) there! this door
Opens upon the forest! Out, begone!
Henceforth I am thy mortal enemy.

Synorix. However, I thank thee (*draws his sword*); thou hast saved my life. [*Exit.*

Sinnatus (*to* Attendant). Return and tell them Synorix is not here. [*Exit* Attendant.
What did that villain Synorix say to you?

Camma. Is *he* — *that* — Synorix?

Sinnatus. Wherefore should you doubt it?
One of the men there knew him.

Camma. Only one,
And he perhaps mistaken in the face.

Sinnatus. Come, come, could he deny it? What did he say?

Camma. What *should* he say?

Sinnatus. What *should* he say, my wife!
He should say this, that being tetrarch once
His own true people cast him from their doors
Like a base coin.

Camma. Not kindly to them?

Sinnatus. Kindly?
O, the most kindly prince in all the world!
Would clap his honest citizens on the back,
Bandy their own rude jests with them, be curious
About the welfare of their babes, their wives,
O, ay — their wives — their wives! What should he say?
He should say nothing to my wife if I
Were by to throttle him! He steep'd himself
In all the lust of Rome. How should *you* guess
What manner of beast it is?

Camma. Yet he seem'd kindly,
And said he loathed the cruelties that Rome
Wrought on her vassals.

Sinnatus. Did he, *honest* man?

Camma. And you, that seldom brook the stranger here,
Have let him hunt the stag with you to-day.

Sinnatus. I warrant you now, he said *he* struck the stag.

Camma. Why, no, he never touch'd upon the stag.

Sinnatus. Why, so I said, *my* arrow. Well, to sleep. [*Goes to close door.*

Camma. Nay, close not yet the door upon a night
That looks half day.

Sinnatus. True; and my friends may spy him
And slay him as he runs.

Camma. He is gone already.
O, look, — yon grove upon the mountain, — white
In the sweet moon as with a lovelier snow!
But what a blotch of blackness underneath!
Sinnatus, you remember — yea, you must,
That there three years ago — the vast vine-bowers
Ran to the summit of the trees, and dropt
Their streamers earthward, which a breeze of May
Took ever and anon, and open'd out
The purple zone of hill and heaven. There
You told your love; and like the swaying vines —
Yea, — with our eyes, — our hearts, our prophet hopes
Let in the happy distance, and that all
But cloudless heaven which we have found together
In our three married years! You kiss'd me there
For the first time. Sinnatus, kiss me now.

Sinnatus. First kiss. (*Kisses her.*) There, then.
You talk almost as if it
Might be the last.

Camma. Will you not eat a little?

Sinnatus. No, no, we found a goatherd's hut, and shared
His fruits and milk. Liar! You will believe
Now that he never struck the stag — a brave one
Which you shall see to-morrow.

Camma. I rise to-morrow
In the gray dawn, and take this holy cup
To lodge it in the shrine of Artemis.

Sinnatus. Good!

Camma. If I be not back in half an hour,
Come after me.

Sinnatus. What! is there danger?

Camma. Nay,
None that I know; 't is but a step from here
To the Temple.

Sinnatus. All my brain is full of sleep.
Wake me before you go, I 'll after you —
After *me* now! [*Closes door and exit.*

Camma (*drawing curtains*). Your shadow. Synorix —
His face was not malignant, and he said
That men malign'd him. Shall I go? Shall I go?
Death, torture —
'He never yet flung back a woman's prayer' —
I go, but I will have my dagger with me. [*Exit.*

Scene III

Same as Scene I. — Dawn

Music and Singing in the Temple

Enter Synorix *watchfully*, *after him* Publius *and* Soldiers

Synorix. Publius!

Publius. Here!

Synorix. Do you remember what
I told you?

Publius. When you cry, 'Rome, Rome,' to seize

On whomsoever may be talking with you,
Or man, or woman, as traitors unto Rome.

Synorix. Right. Back again. How many of you are there?

Publius. Some half a score.

[*Exeunt* Soldiers and Publius.

Synorix. I have my guard about me.
I need not fear the crowd that hunted me
Across the woods, last night. I hardly gain'd
The camp at midnight. Will she come to me
Now that she knows me Synorix? Not if Sinnatus
Has told her all the truth about me. Well,
I cannot help the mould that I was cast in.
I fling all that upon my fate, my star.
I know that I am genial, I would be
Happy, and make all others happy, so
They did not thwart me. Nay, she will not come.
Yet if she be a true and loving wife
She may, perchance, to save this husband. Ay!
See, see, my white bird stepping toward the snare.
Why, now I count it all but miracle,
That this brave heart of mine should shake me so,
As helplessly as some unbearded boy's
When first he meets his maiden in a bower.

Enter CAMMA (*with cup*)

The lark first takes the sunlight on his wing,
But you, twin sister of the morning star,
Forelead the sun.

Camma. Where is Antonius?

Synorix. Not here as yet. You are too early for him. [*She crosses towards Temple.*
Nay, whither go you now?

Camma. To lodge this cup
Within the holy shrine of Artemis,
And so return.

Synorix. To find Antonius here.
[*She goes into the Temple, he looks after her.*
The loveliest life that ever drew the light
From heaven to brood upon her, and enrich
Earth with her shadow! I trust she *will* return.
These Romans dare not violate the Temple.
No, I must lure my game into the camp.
A woman I could live and die for. What!
Die for a woman, what new faith is this?
I am not mad, not sick, not old enough
To dote on one alone. Yes, mad for her,
Camma the stately, Camma the great-hearted,
So mad, I fear some strange and evil chance
Coming upon me, for, by the Gods I seem
Strange to myself!

Re-enter CAMMA

Camma. Where is Antonius?

Synorix. Where? As I said before, you are still too early.

Camma. Too early to be here alone with thee;
For whether men malign thy name, or no,

It bears an evil savor among women.
Where is Antonius? (*Loud.*)

Synorix. Madam, as you know
The camp is half a league without the city;
If you will walk with me we needs must meet
Antonius coming, or at least shall find him
There in the camp.

Camma. No, not one step with thee.
Where is Antonius? (*Louder.*)

Synorix (*advancing towards her*). Then for your own sake,
Lady, I say it with all gentleness,
And for the sake of Sinnatus your husband,
I must compel you.

Camma (*drawing her dagger*). Stay! — too near is death.

Synorix (*disarming her*). Is it not easy to disarm a woman?

Enter SINNATUS (*seizes him from behind by the throat*)

Synorix (*throttled and scarce audible*). Rome! Rome!

Sinnatus. Adulterous dog!

Synorix (*stabbing him with* Camma's *dagger*). What! will you have it?

[Camma *utters a cry and runs to* Sinnatus.

Sinnatus (*falls backward*). I have it in my heart — to the Temple — fly —
For *my* sake — or they seize on thee. Remember!
Away — farewell! [*Dies.*

Camma (*runs up the steps into the Temple, looking back*). Farewell!

Synorix (*seeing her escape*). The women of the Temple drag her in.

Publius! Publius! No,
Antonius would not suffer me to break
Into the sanctuary. She hath escaped.

[*Looking down at* Sinnatus.

'Adulterous dog!' that red-faced rage at me!
Then with one quick short stab — eternal peace.
So end all passions. Then what use in passions?
To warm the cold bonds of our dying life
And, lest we freeze in mortal apathy,
Employ us, heat us, quicken us, help us, keep us
From seeing all too near that urn, those ashes
Which all must be. Well used, they serve us well.
I heard a saying in Egypt, that ambition
Is like the sea wave, which the more you drink
The more you thirst — yea — drink too much, as men
Have done on rafts of wreck — it drives you mad.
I will be no such wreck — am no such gamester
As, having won the stake, would dare the chance
Of double, or losing all. The Roman Senate,
For I have always play'd into their hands,
Means me the crown. And Camma for my bride —
The people love her — if I win her love,
They too will cleave to me, as one with her.
There then I rest, Rome's tributary king.

[*Looking down on* Sinnatus.

Why did I strike him? — having proof enough
Against the man, I surely should have left
That stroke to Rome. He saved my life too. Did
he?
It seem'd so. I have play'd the sudden fool.
And that sets her against me — for the moment.
Camma — well, well, I never found the woman
I could not force or wheedle to my will.
She will be glad at last to wear my crown.
And I will make Galatia prosperous too,
And we will chirp among our vines, and smile
At bygone things till that (*pointing to* Sinnatus)
eternal peace.
Rome! Rome!

Enter PUBLIUS *and* SOLDIERS

Twice I cried Rome. Why came ye not before?
Publius. Why come we now? Whom shall we
seize upon?
Synorix (*pointing to the body of* Sinnatus). The
body of that dead traitor Sinnatus.
Bear him away.

[*Music and singing in Temple.*

ACT II

Scene. — Interior of the Temple of Artemis

Small gold gates on platform in front of the veil before the colossal statue of the Goddess, and in the centre of the Temple a tripod altar, on which is a lighted lamp. Lamps (lighted) suspended between the pillars. Tripods, vases, garlands of flowers, etc., about stage. Altar at back close to Goddess, with two cups. Solemn music. Priestesses decorating the Temple

(*The Chorus of* Priestesses *sing as they enter*)

Artemis, Artemis, hear us, O Mother, hear us, and bless us!
Artemis, thou that art life to the wind, to the wave, to the glebe, to the fire!
Hear thy people who praise thee! O, help us from all that oppress us!
Hear thy priestesses hymn thy glory! O, yield them all their desire!

Priestess. Phœbe, that man from Synorix, who has been
So oft to see the priestess, waits once more
Before the Temple.

Phœbe. We will let her know.

[*Signs to one of the Priestesses, who goes out.*

Since Camma fled from Synorix to our Temple,
And for her beauty, stateliness, and power,
Was chosen priestess here, have you not mark'd
Her eyes were ever on the marble floor?
To-day they are fixt and bright — they look straight out.
Hath she made up her mind to marry him?

Priestess. To marry him who stabb'd her Sinnatus!
You will not easily make me credit that.

Phœbe. Ask her.

Enter CAMMA *as Priestess* (*in front of the curtains*)

Priestess. You will not marry Synorix?

Camma. My girl, I am the bride of Death, and only
Marry the dead.

Priestess. Not Synorix then?

Camma. My girl,
At times this oracle of great Artemis
Has no more power than other oracles
To speak directly.

Phœbe. Will you speak to him,
The messenger from Synorix who waits
Before the Temple?

Camma. Why not? Let him enter

[*Comes forward on to step by tripod.*

Enter a MESSENGER

Messenger (*kneels*). Greeting and health from Synorix. More than once
You have refused his hand. When last I saw you,
You all but yielded. He entreats you now
For your last answer. When he struck at Sinnatus —
As I have many a time declared to you —
He knew not at the moment who had fasten'd
About his throat — he begs you to forget it
As scarce his act — a random stroke. All else
Was love for you; he prays you to believe him.

Camma. I pray him to believe — that I believe him.

Messenger. Why that is well. You mean to marry him?

Camma. I mean to marry him — if that be well.

Messenger. This very day the Romans crown him king
For all his faithful services to Rome.
He wills you then this day to marry him,
And so be throned together in the sight
Of all the people, that the world may know
You twain are reconciled, and no more feuds
Disturb our peaceful vassalage to Rome.

Camma. To-day? Too sudden. I will brood upon it.
When do they crown him?

Messenger. Even now.

Camma. And where?

Messenger. Here by your temple.

Camma. Come once more to me
Before the crowning, — I will answer you.

[*Exit* Messenger.

Phœbe. Great Artemis! O Camma, can it be well,
Or good, or wise, that you should clasp a hand
Red with the sacred blood of Sinnatus?

Camma. Good! mine own dagger driven by Synorix found
All good in the true heart of Sinnatus,
And quench'd it there for ever. Wise!
Life yields to Death, and Wisdom bows to Fate,
Is wisest doing so. Did not this man
Speak well? We cannot fight imperial Rome,
But he and I are both Galatian-born;
And tributary sovereigns, he and I
Might teach this Rome — from knowledge of our people —
Where to lay on her tribute — heavily here
And lightly there. Might I not live for that,
And drown all poor self-passion in the sense
Of public good?

Phœbe. I am sure you will not marry him.

Camma. Are you so sure? I pray you wait and see.

[*Shouts* (*from the distance*) 'Synorix! Synorix!'

Camma. Synorix, Synorix! So they cried Sinnatus
Not so long since — they sicken me. The One
Who shifts his policy suffers something, must
Accuse himself, excuse himself; the Many
Will feel no shame to give themselves the lie.

Phœbe. Most like it was the Roman soldier shouted.

Camma. Their shield-borne patriot of the morning star
Hang'd at midday, their traitor of the dawn
The clamor'd darling of their afternoon!
And that same head they would have play'd at ball with
And kick'd it featureless — they now would crown!
[*Flourish of trumpets.*

Enter a Galatian NOBLEMAN *with crown on a cushion*

Noble (*kneels*). Greeting and health from Synorix. He sends you
This diadem of the first Galatian Queen,
That you may feed your fancy on the glory of it,
And join your life this day with his, and wear it
Beside him on his throne. He waits your answer.

Camma. Tell him there is one shadow among the shadows,
One ghost of all the ghosts — as yet so new,
So strange among them — such an alien there,

So much of husband in it still — that if
The shout of Synorix and Camma sitting
Upon one throne, should reach it, *it* would rise —
He! — He, with that red star between the ribs,
And my knife there — and blast the king and me,
And blanch the crowd with horror. I dare not, sir!
Throne him — and then the marriage — ay, and tell him
That I accept the diadem of Galatia —

[*All are amazed.*

Yea, that ye saw me crown myself withal.

[*Puts on the crown.*

I wait him his crown'd queen.

Noble. So will I tell him. [*Exit.*

Music. Two Priestesses go up the steps before the shrine, draw the curtains on either side (discovering the Goddess), then open the gates and remain on steps, one on either side, and kneel. A Priestess goes off and returns with a veil of marriage, then assists Phœbe *to veil* Camma. *At the same time Priestesses enter and stand on either side of the Temple.* Camma *and all the Priestesses kneel, raise their hands to the Goddess, and bow down.*

[*Shouts,* 'Synorix! Synorix!' *All rise.*

Camma. Fling wide the doors, and let the new-made children
Of our imperial mother see the show.

[*Sunlight pours through the doors.*

I have no heart to do it. (*To* Phœbe.) Look for me! [*Crouches.* Phœbe *looks out.*
[*Shouts*, 'Synorix! Synorix!'

Phœbe. He climbs the throne. Hot blood, ambition, pride
So bloat and redden his face — O, would it were
His third last apoplexy! O, bestial!
O, how unlike our goodly Sinnatus!

Camma (*on the ground*). You wrong him, surely; far as the face goes
A goodlier-looking man than Sinnatus.

Phœbe (*aside*). How dare she say it? I could hate her for it,
But that she is distracted. [*A flourish of trumpets.*

Camma. Is he crown'd?

Phœbe. Ay, there they crown him.
[*Crowd without shout*, 'Synorix! Synorix!'

A Priestess brings a box of spices to Camma, *who throws them on the altar flame.*

Camma. Rouse the dead altar-flame, fling in the spices,
Nard, cinnamon, amomum, benzoin.
Let all the air reel into a mist of odor,
As in the midmost heart of Paradise.
Lay down the Lydian carpets for the King.
The King should pace on purple to his bride,
And music there to greet my lord the King. [*Music.*
(*To* Phœbe.) Dost thou remember when I wedded Sinnatus?

Ay, thou wast there — whether from maiden fears
Or reverential love for him I loved,
Or some strange second-sight, the marriage-cup
Wherefrom we make libation to the Goddess
So shook within my hand that the red wine
Ran down the marble, and lookt like blood, like blood.

Phœbe. I do remember your first-marriage fears.

Camma. I have no fears at this my second marriage.

See here — I stretch my hand out — hold it there.
How steady it is!

Phœbe. Steady enough to stab him

Camma. O, hush! O, peace! This violence ill becomes
The silence of our Temple. Gentleness,
Low words best chime with this solemnity.

Enter a procession of Priestesses and Children bearing garlands and golden goblets, and strewing flowers.

Enter SYNORIX (*as King, with gold laurel-wreath crown and purple robes*), *followed by* ANTONIUS, PUBLIUS, *Noblemen, Guards, and the Populace.*

Camma. Hail, King!

Synorix. Hail, Queen!
The wheel of Fate has roll'd me to the top.
I would that happiness were gold, that I
Might cast my largess of it to the crowd!
I would that every man made feast to-day,

Beneath the shadow of our pines and planes!
For all my truer life begins to-day.
The past is like a travell'd land now sunk
Below the horizon — like a barren shore
That grew salt weeds, but now all drown'd in love
And glittering at full tide — the bounteous bays
And havens filling with a blissful sea.
Nor speak I now too mightily, being King
And happy! happiest, lady, in my power
To make you happy.

Camma. Yes, sir.

Synorix. Our Antonius,
Our faithful friend of Rome, tho' Rome may set
A free foot where she will, yet of his courtesy
Entreats he may be present at our marriage.

Camma. Let him come — a legion with him, if he will.
(*To* Antonius.) Welcome, my lord Antonius, to our Temple.
(*To* Synorix.) You on this side the altar. (*To* Antonius.) You on that.
Call first upon the Goddess, Synorix.

[*All face the Goddess. Priestesses, Children, Populace, and Guards kneel, the others remain standing.*

Synorix. O thou that dost inspire the germ with life,
The child, a thread within the house of birth,
And give him limbs, then air, and send him forth
The glory of his father — thou whose breath

Is balmy wind to robe our hills with grass,
And kindle all our vales with myrtle-blossom,
And roll the golden oceans of our grain,
And sway the long grape-bunches of our vines,
And fill all hearts with fatness and the lust
Of plenty — make me happy in my marriage!

Chorus (*chanting*). Artemis, Artemis, hear him,
Ionian Artemis!

Camma. O thou that slayest the babe within the
womb
Or in the being born, or after slayest him
As boy or man, great Goddess, whose storm-voice
Unsockets the strong oak, and rears his root
Beyond his head, and strows our fruits, and lays
Our golden grain, and runs to sea and makes it
Foam over all the fleeted wealth of kings
And peoples, hear!
Whose arrow is the plague — whose quick flash splits
The mid-sea mast, and rifts the tower to the rock,
And hurls the victor's column down with him
That crowns it, hear!
Who causest the safe earth to shudder and gape,
And gulf and flatten in her closing chasm
Domed cities, hear!
Whose lava-torrents blast and blacken a province
To a cinder, hear!
Whose winter-cataracts find a realm and leave it
A waste of rock and ruin, hear! I call thee
To make my marriage prosper to my wish!

Chorus. Artemis, Artemis, hear her, Ephesian Artemis!

Camma. Artemis, Artemis, hear me, Galatian Artemis!

I call on our own Goddess in our own Temple.

Chorus. Artemis, Artemis, hear her, Galatian Artemis! [*Thunder. All rise.*

Synorix (*aside*). Thunder! Ay, ay, the storm was drawing hither

Across the hills when I was being crown'd.

I wonder if I look as pale as she?

Camma. Art thou — still bent — on marrying?

Synorix. Surely — yet

These are strange words to speak to Artemis.

Camma. Words are not always what they seem, my King.

I will be faithful to thee till thou die.

Synorix. I thank thee, Camma, — I thank thee.

Camma (*turning to* Antonius). Antonius,

Much graced are we that our Queen Rome in you

Deigns to look in upon our barbarisms.

[*Turns, goes up steps to altar before the Goddess. Takes a cup from off the altar. Holds it towards* Antonius. Antonius *goes up to the foot of the steps opposite to* Synorix.

You see this cup, my lord. [*Gives it to him.*

Antonius. Most curious!

The many-breasted mother Artemis

Emboss'd upon it.

Camma. It is old, I know not
How many hundred years. Give it me again.
It is the cup belonging our own Temple.

[*Puts it back on altar, and takes up the cup of Act I. Showing it to* Antonius.

Here is another sacred to the Goddess,
The gift of Synorix; and the Goddess, being
For this most grateful, wills, thro' me her priestess,
In honor of his gift and of our marriage,
That Synorix should drink from his own cup.

Synorix. I thank thee, Camma, — I thank thee.

Camma. For — my lord —
It is our ancient custom in Galatia
That ere two souls be knit for life and death,
They two should drink together from one cup,
In symbol of their married unity,
Making libation to the Goddess. Bring me
The costly wines we use in marriages.

[*They bring in a large jar of wine.* Camma *pours wine into cup.*

(*To* Synorix.) See here, I fill it. (*To* Antonius.) Will you drink, my lord?

Antonius. I? Why should I? I am not to be married.

Camma. But that might bring a Roman blessing on us.

Antonius (*refusing cup*). Thy pardon, priestess!

Camma. Thou art in the right.
This blessing is for Synorix and for me.

See, first I make libation to the Goddess,
[*Makes libation.*
And now I drink. [*Drinks and fills the cup again.*
Thy turn, Galatian King.
Drink and drink deep — our marriage will be fruitful.
Drink and drink deep, and thou wilt make me happy.
[Synorix *goes up to her. She hands him the cup. He drinks.*
Synorix. There, Camma! I have almost drain'd the cup —
A few drops left.
Camma. Libation to the Goddess.
[*He throws the remaining drops on the altar and gives* Camma *the cup.*
Camma (*placing the cup on the altar*). Why, then the Goddess hears.
[*Comes down and forward to tripod.* Antonius *follows.*
Antonius,
Where wast thou on that morning when I came
To plead to thee for Sinnatus's life,
Beside this temple half a year ago?
Antonius. I never heard of this request of thine.
Synorix (*coming forward hastily to foot of tripod steps*). I sought him, and I could not find him. Pray you,
Go on with the marriage rites.

Camma. Antonius —
'Camma!' Who spake?
Antonius. Not I.
Phœbe. Nor any here.
Camma. I am all but sure that some one spake.
Antonius,
If you had found him plotting against Rome,
Would you have tortured Sinnatus to death?
Antonius. No thought was mine of torture or of death,
But had I found him plotting, I had counsell'd him
To rest from vain resistance. Rome is fated
To rule the world. Then, if he had not listen'd,
I might have sent him prisoner to Rome.
Synorix. Why do you palter with the ceremony?
Go on with the marriage rites.
Camma. They are finish'd.
Synorix. How!
Camma. Thou hast drunk deep enough to make me happy.
Dost thou not feel the love I bear to thee
Glow thro' thy veins?
Synorix. The love I bear to thee
Glows thro' my veins since first I look'd on thee.
But wherefore slur the perfect ceremony?
The sovereign of Galatia weds his Queen.
Let all be done to the fullest in the sight
Of all the Gods.
Nay, rather than so clip

The flowery robe of Hymen, we would add
Some golden fringe of gorgeousness beyond
Old use, to make the day memorial, when
Synorix, first King, Camma, first Queen o' the Realm,
Drew here the richest lot from Fate, to live
And die together.
This pain — what is it? — again?
I had a touch of this last year — in — Rome.
Yes, yes. (*To* Antonius.) Your arm — a moment
— it will pass.
I reel beneath the weight of utter joy —
This all too happy day, crown — queen at once.
[*Staggers.*
O all ye Gods — Jupiter! — Jupiter!
[*Falls backward.*

Camma. Dost thou cry out upon the Gods of Rome?
Thou art Galatian-born. Our Artemis
Has vanquish'd their Diana.

Synorix (*on the ground*). I am poison'd.
She — close the Temple door. Let her not fly.

Camma (*leaning on tripod*). Have I not drunk of the same cup with thee?

Synorix. Ay, by the Gods of Rome and all the world,
She too — she too — the bride! the Queen! and I —
Monstrous! I that loved her.

Camma. I loved *him.*

Synorix. O murderous mad-woman! I pray you lift me

And make me walk awhile. I have heard these poisons
May be walk'd down.

[Antonius *and* Publius *raise him up.*

My feet are tons of lead,
They will break in the earth — I am sinking — hold me —
Let me alone.

[*They leave him; he sinks down on ground.*

Too late — thought myself wise —
A woman's dupe! Antonius, tell the Senate
I have been most true to Rome — would have been true
To her — if — if — [*Falls as if dead.*

Camma (*coming and leaning over him*). So falls the throne of an hour.

Snyorix (*half rising*). Throne? is it thou? the Fates are throned, not we —
Not guilty of ourselves — thy doom and mine —
Thou — coming my way too — Camma — good-night. [*Dies.*

Camma (*upheld by weeping Priestesses*). Thy way? poor worm, crawl down thine own black hole
To the lowest hell. Antonius, is *he* there?
I meant thee to have follow'd — better thus.
Nay, if my people must be thralls of Rome,
He is gentle, tho' a Roman.

[*Sinks back into the arms of the Priestesses.*

Antonius. Thou art one
With thine own people, and though a Roman I
Forgive thee, Camma.

Camma (*raising herself*). 'CAMMA!' — why, there again
I am most sure that some one call'd. O women,
Ye will have Roman masters. I am glad
I shall not see it. Did not some old Greek
Say death was the chief good? He had my fate for it,
Poison'd. (*Sinks back again.*) Have I the crown on? I will go
To meet him, crown'd! crown'd victor of my will —
On my last voyage — but the wind has fail'd —
Growing dark too — but light enough to row.
Row to the Blessed Isles! the Blessed Isles! —
Sinnatus!
Why comes he not to meet me? It is the crown
Offends him — and my hands are too sleepy
To lift it off (Phœbe *takes the crown off*). Who touched me then? I thank you.
[*Rises, with outspread arms.*
There — league on league of ever-shining shore
Beneath an ever-rising sun — I see him —
'Camma, Camma!' Sinnatus, Sinnatus! [*Dies.*

THE PROMISE OF MAY

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

FARMER DOBSON.
MR. PHILIP EDGAR (*afterwards* MR. HAROLD).
FARMER STEER (DORA *and* EVA'S *Father*).
MR. WILSON (*a Schoolmaster*).

HIGGINS
JAMES
DAN SMITH } *Farm Laborers.*
JACKSON
ALLEN

DORA STEER.
EVA STEER.

SALLY ALLEN
MILLY } *Farm Servants.*

Farm Servants, Laborers, etc

THE PROMISE OF MAY

'A surface man of theories, true to none'

ACT I

Scene. — Before Farmhouse

Farming Men and Women. Farming Men carrying forms, etc., Women carrying baskets of knives and forks, etc.

First Farming Man. Be thou a-gawin' to the long barn?

Second Farming Man. Ay, to be sewer! Be thou?

First Farming Man. Why, o' coorse, fur it be the owd man's birthdaäy. He be heighty this very daäy, and 'e telled all on us to be i' the long barn by one o'clock, fur he 'll gie us a big dinner, and haäfe th' parish 'll be theer, an' Miss Dora, an' Miss Eva, an' all!

Second Farming Man. Miss Dora be coomed back, then?

First Farming Man. Ay, haäfe an hour ago. She be in theer now. (*Pointing to house.*) Owd

Steer wur afeärd she would n't be back i' time to keep his birthdaäy, and he wur in a tew about it all the murnin'; and he sent me wi' the gig to Littlechester to fetch 'er; and 'er an' the owd man they fell a kissin' o' one another like two sweet'arts i' the poorch as soon as he clapt eyes of 'er.

Second Farming Man. Foälks says he likes Miss Eva the best.

First Farming Man. Naäy, I knaws nowt o' what foälks says, an' I caäres nowt neither. Foälks does n't hallus knaw thessens; but sewer I be, they be two o' the purtiest gels ye can see of a summer murnin'.

Second Farming Man. Beänt Miss Eva gone off a bit of 'er good looks o' laäte?

First Farming Man. Noä, not a bit.

Second Farming Man. Why, coöm awaäy, then, to the long barn. [*Exeunt.*

DORA *looks out of window. Enter* DOBSON

DORA (*singing*)

The town lay still in the low sunlight,
The hen cluckt late by the white farm gate,
The maid to her dairy came in from the cow,
The stock-dove coo'd at the fall of night,
The blossom had open'd on every bough;
O, joy for the promise of May, of May,
O, joy for the promise of May!

(*Nodding at* Dobson.) I 'm coming down, Mr. Dobson. I have n't seen Eva yet. Is she anywhere in the garden ?

Dobson. Noä, Miss. I ha'n't seed 'er neither.

DORA (*enters singing*)

But a red fire woke in the heart of the town,
And a fox from the glen ran away with the hen,
And a cat to the cream, and a rat to the cheese;
And the stock-dove coo'd, till a kite dropt down,
And a salt wind burnt the blossoming trees;
O, grief for the promise of May, of May,
O, grief for the promise of May !

I don't know why I sing that song ; I don't love it.

Dobson. Blessings on your pretty voice, Miss Dora ! Wheer did they larn ye that ?

Dora. In Cumberland, Mr. Dobson.

Dobson. An' how did ye leäve the owd uncle i' Coomberland ?

Dora. Getting better, Mr. Dobson. But he 'll never be the same man again.

Dobson. An' how d' ye find the owd man 'ere ?

Dora. As well as ever. I came back to keep his birthday.

Dobson. Well, I be coomed to keep his birthdaäy an' all. The owd man be heighty to-daäy, beänt he ?

Dora. Yes, Mr. Dobson. And the day 's bright

like a friend, but the wind east like an enemy. Help me to move this bench for him into the sun. (*They move bench.*) No, not that way — here, under the apple-tree. Thank you. Look how full of rosy blossom it is. [*Pointing to apple-tree.*

Dobson. Theer be redder blossoms nor them, Miss Dora.

Dora. Where do they blow, Mr. Dobson?

Dobson. Under your eyes, Miss Dora.

Dora. Do they?

Dobson. And your eyes be as blue as —

Dora. What, Mr. Dobson? A butcher's frock?

Dobson. Noä, Miss Dora; as blue as —

Dora. Bluebell, harebell, speedwell, bluebottle, succory, forget-me-not?

Dobson. Noä, Miss Dora; as blue as —

Dora. The sky? or the sea on a blue day?

Dobson. Naäy then. I meän'd they be as blue as violets.

Dora. Are they?

Dobson. Theer ye goäs ageän, Miss, niver believing owt I says to ye — hallus a-fobbing ma off, tho' ye knaws I love ye. I warrants ye 'll think moor o' this young Squire Edgar as ha' coomed among us — the Lord knaws how — ye 'll think more on 'is little finger than hall my hand at the haltar.

Dora. Perhaps, Master Dobson. I can't tell, for I have never seen him. But my sister wrote

that he was mighty pleasant, and had no pride in him.

Dobson. He 'll be arter you now, Miss Dora.

Dora. Will he? How can I tell?

Dobson. He 's been arter Miss Eva, haän't he?

Dora. Not that I know.

Dobson. Did n't I spy 'em a-sitting i' the woodbine harbor togither?

Dora. What of that? Eva told me that he was taking her likeness. He 's an artist.

Dobson. What 's a hartist? I doänt believe he 's iver a 'eart under his waistcoat. And I tells ye what, Miss Dora: he 's no respect for the Queen, or the parson, or the justice o' peace, or owt. I ha' heärd 'im a-gawin' on 'ud make your 'air — God bless it! — stan' on end. And wuss nor that. When theer wur a meeting o' farmers at Littlechester t' other daäy, and they was all a-crying out at the bad times, he cooms up, and he calls out among our oän men, 'The land belongs to the people!'

Dora. And what did *you* say to that?

Dobson. Well, I says, s'pose my pig 's the land, and you says it belongs to the parish, and theer be a thousand i' the parish, taäkin' in the women and childer; and s'pose I kills my pig, and gi'es it among 'em, why there wud n't be a dinner for nawbody, and I should ha' lost the pig.

Dora. And what did he say to that?

Dobson. Nowt — what could he saäy? But I

taäkes 'im fur a bad lot and a burn fool, and I haätes the very sight on him.

Dora (*looking at* Dobson). Master Dobson, you are a comely man to look at.

Dobson. I thank you for that, Miss Dora, onyhow.

Dora. Ay, but you turn right ugly when you 're in an ill temper; and I promise you that if you forget yourself in your behavior to this gentleman, my father's friend, I will never change word with you again.

Enter FARMING MAN *from barn*

Farming Man. Miss, the farming men 'ull hev their dinner i' the long barn, and the master 'ud be straänge an' pleased if you 'd step in fust, and see that all be right and reg'lar fur 'em afoor he coöm.

[*Exit.*

Dora. I go. Master Dobson, did you hear what I said?

Dobson. Yeäs, yeäs! I 'll not meddle wi' 'im if he doänt meddle wi' meä. (*Exit* Dora.) 'Coomly,' says she. I niver thowt o' mysen i' that waäy; but if she 'd taäke to ma i' that waäy, or ony waäy, I 'd slaäve out my life fur 'er. 'Coomly to look at,' says she — but she said it spiteful-like. To look at — yeäs, 'coomly;' and she may n't be so fur out theer. But if that be nowt to she, then it be nowt to me. (*Looking off stage.*) Schoolmaster! Why if

Steer han't haxed schoolmaster to dinner, thaw 'e knaws I was hallus ageän heving schoolmaster i' the parish! fur him as be handy wi' a booök beänt but haäfe a hand at a pitchfork.

Enter WILSON

Well, Wilson. I seed that one cow o' thine i' the pinfold ageän as I wur a-coomin' 'ere.

Wilson. Very likely, Mr. Dobson. She *will* break fence. I can't keep her in order.

Dobson. An' if tha can't keep thy one cow i' horder, how can tha keep all thy scholards i' horder? But let that goä by. What dost a knaw o' this Mr. Hedgar as be a-lodgin' wi' ye? I coom'd upon 'im t' other daäy lookin' at the coontry, then a-scrattin upon a bit o' paäper, then a-lookin' ageän; and I taäked 'im fur soom sort of a land-surveyor — but a beänt.

Wilson. He 's a Somersetshire man, and a very civil-spoken gentleman.

Dobson. Gentleman! What be he a-doing here ten mile an' moor fro' a raäil? We laäys out o' the waäy fur gentlefoäk altogither — leästwaäys they niver cooms 'ere but fur the trout i' our beck, fur they be knaw'd as far as Littlechester. But 'e doänt fish neither.

Wilson. Well, it 's no sin in a gentleman not to fish.

Dobson. Noä, but I haätes 'im.

Wilson. Better step out of his road, then, for he 's walking to us, and with a book in his hand.

Dobson. An' I haätes booöks an' all, fur they puts foälk off the owd waäys.

Enter EDGAR, *reading — not seeing* DOBSON *and* WILSON

Edgar. This author, with his charm of simple style
And close dialectic, all but proving man
An automatic series of sensations,
Has often numb'd me into apathy
Against the unpleasant jolts of this rough road
That breaks off short into the abysses — made me
A quietist taking all things easily.

Dobson (*aside*). There mun be summut wrong theer, Wilson, fur I doänt understan' it.

Wilson (*aside*). Nor I either, Mr. Dobson.

Dobson (*scornfully*). An' thou doänt understan' it neither — and thou schoolmaster an' all!

Edgar. What can a man, then, live for but sensations,
Pleasant ones? men of old would undergo
Unpleasant for the sake of pleasant ones
Hereafter, like the Moslem beauties waiting
To clasp their lovers by the golden gates.
For me, whose cheerless Houris after death
Are Night and Silence, pleasant ones — the while —
If possible, here! to crop the flower and pass.

Dobson. Well, I never 'eärd the likes o' that afoor.

Wilson (*aside*). But I have, Mr. Dobson. It's the old Scripture text, 'Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die.' I 'm sorry for it, for, tho' he never comes to church, I thought better of him.

Edgar. 'What are we,' says the blind old man in Lear:

'As flies to the gods; they kill us for their sport.'

Dobson (*aside*). Then the owd man i' Lear should be ashaämed of hissen, but noän o' the parishes goäs by that naäme 'ereabouts.

Edgar. The gods! but they, the shadows of ourselves,
Have past for ever. It is Nature kills,
And not for *her* sport either. She knows nothing.
Man only knows, the worse for him! for why
Cannot *he* take his pastime like the flies?
And if my pleasure breed another's pain,
Well — is not that the course of Nature too,
From the dim dawn of being — her main law
Whereby she grows in beauty — that her flies
Must massacre each other? this poor Nature!

Dobson. Natur! Natur! Well, it be i' *my* natur to knock 'im o' the 'eäd now; but I weänt.

Edgar. A quietist taking all things easily — why —

Have I been dipping into this again
To steel myself against the leaving her?
[*Closes book, seeing* Wilson.
Good day!

Wilson. Good day, sir.

[Dobson *looks hard at* Edgar.

Edgar (*to* Dobson). Have I the pleasure, friend, of knowing you?

Dobson. Dobson.

Edgar. Good day, then, Dobson. [*Exit.*

Dobson. 'Good daäy then, Dobson!' Civil-spoken i'deed! Why, Wilson, tha 'eärd 'im thysen — the feller could n't find a Mister in his mouth fur me, as farms five hoonderd haäcre.

Wilson. You never find one for me, Mr. Dobson.

Dobson. Noä, fur thou be nobbut schoolmaster; but I taäkes 'im for a Lunnun swindler, and a burn fool.

Wilson. He can hardly be both, and he pays me regular every Saturday.

Dobson. Yeäs; but I haätes 'im.

Enter Steer, Farm Men *and* Women

Steer (*goes and sits under apple-tree*). Hev' ony o' ye seen Eva?

Dobson. Noä, Mr. Steer.

Steer. Well, I reckons they 'll hev' a fine cider-crop to-year if the blossom 'owds. Good murnin', neighbors, and the saäme to you, my men. I taäkes

it kindly of all o' you that you be coomed — what 's the newspaäper word, Wilson? — celebrate — to celebrate my birthdaäy i' this fashion. Niver man 'ed better friends, and I will saäy niver master 'ed better men; fur thaw I may ha' fallen out wi' ye sometimes, the fault, mebbe, wur as much mine as yours; and, thaw I says it mysen, niver men 'ed a better master — and I knaws what men be, and what masters be, fur I wur nobbut a laäborer, and now I be a landlord — burn a plowman, and now, as far as money goäs, I be a gentleman, thaw I beänt naw scholard, fur I 'ednt naw time to maäke mysen a scholard while I wur maäkin' mysen a gentleman, but I ha' taäen good care to turn out boäth my darters right down fine laädies.

Dobson. An' soä they be.

First Farming Man. Soä they be! soä they be!

Second Farming Man. The Lord bless boäth on 'em!

Third Farming Man. An' the saäme to you, master!

Fourth Farming Man. And long life to boäth on 'em! An' the saäme to you, Master Steer, likewise!

Steer. Thank ye!

Enter Eva

Wheer 'asta been?

Eva (*timidly*). Many happy returns of the day, father.

Steer. They can't be many, my dear, but I 'oäpes they 'll be 'appy.

Dobson. Why, tha looks haäle anew to last to a hoonderd.

Steer. An' why should n't I last to a hoonderd? Haäle! why should n't I be haäle? fur thaw I be heighty this very daäy, I niver 'es sa much as one pin's prick of paäin; an' I can taäke my glass along wi' the youngest, fur I niver touched a drop of owt till my oän wedding-daäy, an' then I wur turned huppads o' sixty. Why should n't I be haäle? I ha' plowed the ten-aäcre — it be mine now — afoor ony o' ye wur burn — ye all knaws the ten-aäcre — I mun ha' plowed it moor nor a hoonderd times; hallus hup at sunrise, and I 'd drive the plow straäit as a line right i' the faäce o' the sun, then back ageän, a-follering my oän shadder — then hup ageän i' the faäce o' the sun. Eh! how the sun 'ud shine, and the larks 'ud sing i' them daäys, and the smell o' the mou'd an' all. Eh! if I could ha' gone on wi' the plowin' nobbut the smell o' the mou'd 'ud ha' maäde ma live as long as Jerusalem.

Eva. Methuselah, father.

Steer. Ay, lass, but when thou be as owd as me thou 'll put one word fur another as I does.

Dobson. But, Steer, thaw thou be haäle anew I seed tha a-limpin' up just now wi' the roomatics i' the knee.

Steer. Roomatics! Noä; I laäme't my knee last night running arter a thief. Beänt there housebreäkers down i' Littlechester, Dobson — doänt ye hear of ony?

Dobson. Ay, that there be. Immanuel Goldsmith's was broke into o' Monday night, and ower a hoonderd pounds worth o' rings stolen.

Steer. So I thowt, and I heärd the winder — that 's the winder at the end o' the passage, that goäs by thy chaumber. (*Turning to* Eva.) Why, lass, what maäkes tha sa red? Did 'e git into thy chaumber?

Eva. Father!

Steer. Well, I runned arter thief i' the dark, and fell ageän coalscuttle and my kneeä gev waäy or I 'd ha' cotched 'im, but afoor I coomed up he got thruff the winder ageän.

Eva. Got thro' the window again?

Steer. Ay, but he left the mark of 'is foot i' the flower-bed; now theer be noän o' my men, thinks I to mysen, 'ud ha' done it 'cep' it were Dan Smith, fur I cotched 'im once a-stealin' coäls, an' I sent fur 'im, an' I measured his foot wi' the mark i' the bed, but it would n't fit — seeäms to me the mark wur maäde by a Lunnun boot. (*Looks at* Eva.) Why, now, what maäkes tha sa white?

Eva. Fright, father!

Steer. Maäke thysen eäsy. I 'll hev the winder naäiled up, and put Towser under it.

Eva (*clasping her hands*). No, no, father! Towser 'll tear him all to pieces.

Steer. Let him keep awaäy, then; but coom, coom! let 's be gawin. They ha' broached a barrel of aäle i' the long barn, and the fiddler be theer, and the lads and lassies 'ull hev a dance.

Eva (*aside*). Dance! small heart have I to dance. I should seem to be dancing upon a grave.

Steer. Wheer be Mr. Edgar? about the premises?

Dobson. Hallus about the premises!

Steer. So much the better, so much the better. I likes 'im, and Eva likes 'im. Eva can do owt wi' 'im; look for 'im, Eva, and bring 'im to the barn. He 'ant naw pride in 'im, and we 'll git 'im to speechify for us arter dinner.

Eva. Yes, father! [*Exit*.

Steer. Coom along then, all the rest o' ye! Church-warden be a coomin', thaw me and 'im we niver 'grees about the tithe; and parson mebbe, thaw he niver mended that gap i' the glebe fence as I telled 'im; and blacksmith, thaw he niver shoes a herse to my likings; and baäker, thaw I sticks to hoäm-maäde — but all on 'em welcome, all on 'em welcome; and I 've hed the long barn cleared out of all the machines, and the sacks, and the taäters, and the mangles, and theer 'll be room anew for all o' ye. Foller me.

All. Yeäs, yeäs! Three cheers for Mr. Steer.

[*All exeunt except* Dobson *into barn*.

Enter EDGAR

Dobson (*who is going, turns*). Squire! — if so be you be a squire.

Edgar. Dobbins, I think.

Dobson. Dobbins, you thinks; and I thinks ye weärs a Lunnun boot.

Edgar. Well?

Dobson. And I thinks I 'd like to taäke the measure o' your foot.

Edgar. Ay, if you 'd like to measure your own length upon the grass.

Dobson. Coom, coom, that 's a good un. Why, I could throw four o' ye; but I promised one of the Misses I would n't meddle wi' ye, and I weänt.

[*Exit into barn.*

Edgar. Jealous of me with Eva! Is it so?
Well, tho' I grudge the pretty jewel, that I
Have worn, to such a clod, yet that might be
The best way out of it, if the child could keep
Her counsel. I am sure I wish her happy.
But I must free myself from this entanglement.
I have all my life before me — so has she —
Give her a month or two, and her affections
Will flower toward the light in some new face.
Still I am half-afraid to meet her now.
She will urge marriage on me. I hate tears.
Marriage is but an old tradition. I hate
Traditions, ever since my narrow father,
After my frolic with his tenant's girl,

Made younger elder son, violated the whole
Tradition of our land, and left his heir,
Born, happily, with some sense of art, to live
By brush and pencil. By and by, when Thought
Comes down among the crowd, and man perceives that
The lost gleam of an after-life but leaves him
A beast of prey in the dark, why then the crowd
May wreak my wrongs upon my wrongers. Marriage!
That fine, fat, hook-nosed uncle of mine, old Harold,
Who leaves me all his land at Littlechester,
He, too, would oust me from his will, if I
Made such a marriage. And marriage in itself —
The storm is hard at hand will sweep away
Thrones, churches, ranks, traditions, customs, marriage
One of the feeblest! Then the man, the woman,
Following their best affinities, will each
Bid their old bond farewell with smiles, not tears;
Good wishes, not reproaches; with no fear
Of the world's gossiping clamor, and no need
Of veiling their desires.
Conventionalism,
Who shrieks by day at what she does by night,
Would call this vice; but one time's vice may be
The virtue of another; and Vice and Virtue
Are but two masks of self; and what hereafter

Shall mark out Vice from Virtue in the gulf
Of never-dawning darkness?

Enter Eva

My sweet Eva,
Where have you lain in ambush all the morning?
They say your sister, Dora, has return'd,
And that should make you happy, if you love her!
But you look troubled.

Eva. O, I love her so
I was afraid of her, and I hid myself.
We never kept a secret from each other;
She would have seen at once into my trouble,
And ask'd me what I could not answer. O, Philip,
Father heard you last night. Our savage mastiff,
That all but kill'd the beggar, will be placed
Beneath the window, Philip.

Edgar. Savage, is he?
What matters? Come, give me your hand and kiss me
This beautiful May-morning.

Eva. The most beautiful
May we have had for many years!

Edgar. And here
Is the most beautiful morning of this May.
Nay, you must smile upon me! There — you make
The May and morning still more beautiful,
You, the most beautiful blossom of the May.

Eva. Dear Philip, all the world is beautiful
If we were happy, and could chime in with it.

Edgar. True; for the senses, love, are for the world;
That for the senses.

Eva. Yes.

Edgar. And when the man,
The child of evolution, flings aside
His swaddling-bands, the morals of the tribe,
He, following his own instincts as his God,
Will enter on the larger golden age,
No pleasure then taboo'd; for when the tide
Of full democracy has overwhelm'd
This Old World, from that flood will rise the New,
Like the Love-goddess, with no bridal veil,
Ring, trinket of the Church, but naked Nature
In all her loveliness.

Eva. What are you saying?

Edgar. That, if we did not strain to make ourselves
Better and higher than Nature, we might be
As happy as the bees there at their honey
In these sweet blossoms.

Eva. Yes; how sweet they smell!

Edgar. There! let me break some off for you.
[*Breaking branch off.*

Eva. My thanks.
But, look, how wasteful of the blossom you are!

One, two, three, four, five, six — you have robb'd
poor father
Of ten good apples. O, I forgot to tell you
He wishes you to dine along with us,
And speak for him after — you that are so clever!

Edgar. I grieve I cannot; but, indeed —

Eva. What is it?

Edgar. Well, business. I must leave you, love, to-day.

Eva. Leave me, to-day! And when will you return?

Edgar. I cannot tell precisely; but —

Eva. But what?

Edgar. I trust, my dear, we shall be always friends.

Eva. After all that has gone between us — friends?
What, only friends! [*Drops branch.*

Edgar. All that has gone between us
Should surely make us friends.

Eva. But keep us lovers.

Edgar. Child, do you love me now?

Eva. Yes, now and ever.

Edgar. Then you should wish us both to love for ever.
But, if you *will* bind love to one for ever,
Altho' at first he take his bonds for flowers,
As years go on, he feels them press upon him,
Begins to flutter in them, and at last

Breaks thro' them, and so flies away for ever;
While, had you left him free use of his wings,
Who knows that he had ever dream'd of flying?

Eva. But all that sounds so wicked and so strange;
'Till death us part' — those are the only words,
The true ones — nay, and those not true enough,
For they that love do not believe that death
Will part them. Why do you jest with me, and try
To fright me? Tho' you are a gentleman,
I but a farmer's daughter —

Edgar. Tut! you talk
Old feudalism. When the great Democracy
Makes a new world —

Eva. And if you be not jesting,
Neither the old world, nor the new, nor father,
Sister, nor you, shall ever see me more.

Edgar (*movea*). Then — (*aside*) Shall I say it? — (*aloud*) fly with me to-day.

Eva. No! Philip, Philip, if you do not marry me,
I shall go mad for utter shame and die.

Edgar. Then, if we needs must be conventional,
When shall your parish-parson bawl our banns
Before your gaping clowns?

Eva. Not in our church —
I think I scarce could hold my head up there.
Is there no other way?

Edgar. Yes, if you cared
To fee an over-opulent superstition,
Then they would grant you what they call a license
To marry. Do you wish it?

Eva. *Do* I wish it?

Edgar. In London.

Eva. You will write to me?

Edgar. I will.

Eva. And I will fly to you thro' the night, the storm —
Yes, tho' the fire should run along the ground,
As once it did in Egypt. O, you see,
I was just out of school, I had no mother —
My sister far away — and you, a gentleman,
Told me to trust you — yes, in everything —
That was the only *true* love; and I trusted —
O, yes, indeed, I would have died for you.
How could you — O, how could you? — nay, how could I?
But now you will set all right again, and I
Shall not be made the laughter of the village,
And poor old father not die miserable.

DORA (*singing in the distance*)

O, joy for the promise of May, of May,
O, joy for the promise of May!

Edgar. Speak not so loudly; that must be your sister.

You never told her, then, of what has past
Between us.

Eva. Never!

Edgar. Do not till I bid you.

Eva. No, Philip, no. [*Turns away.*

Edgar (*moved*). How gracefully there she stands
Weeping — the little Niobe! What! we prize
The statue or the picture all the more
When we have made them ours! Is she less lovable,
Less lovely, being wholly mine? To stay —
Follow my art among these quiet fields,
Live with these honest folk —
and play the fool!
No! she that gave herself to me so easily
Will yield herself as easily to another.

Eva. Did you speak, Philip?

Edgar. Nothing more, farewell.
[*They embrace.*

DORA (*coming nearer*)

O, grief for the promise of May, of May,
O, grief for the promise of May!

Edgar (*still embracing her*). Keep up your heart until we meet again.

Eva. If that should break before we meet again?

Edgar. Break! nay, but call for Philip when you will,
And he returns.

Eva. Heaven hears you, Philip Edgar!

Edgar (*moved*). And *he* would hear you even from the grave.

Heaven curse him if he come not at your call!

[*Exit.*

Enter DORA

Dora. Well, Eva!

Eva. O, Dora, Dora, how long you have been away from home! O, how often I have wished for you! It seemed to me that we were parted for ever.

Dora. For ever, you foolish child! What 's come over you? We parted like the brook yonder about the alder island, to come together again in a moment and to go on together again, till one of us be married. But where is this Mr. Edgar whom you praised so in your first letters? You have n't even mentioned him in your last?

Eva. He has gone to London.

Dora. Ay, child; and you look thin and pale. Is it for his absence? Have you fancied yourself in love with him? That 's all nonsense, you know, such a baby as you are. But you shall tell me all about it.

Eva. Not now — presently. Yes, I have been in trouble, but I am happy — I think, quite happy now.

Dora (*taking* Eva's *hand*). Come, then, and make them happy in the long barn, for father is in his

glory, and there is a piece of beef like a house-side, and a plum-pudding as big as the round hay-stack. But see, they are coming out for the dance already. Well, my child, let us join them.

Enter all from barn, laughing. EVA *sits reluctantly under apple-tree.* STEER *enters, smoking, sits by* EVA

Dance

ACT II

Five years have elapsed between Acts I and II

SCENE. — A MEADOW. ON ONE SIDE A PATHWAY GOING OVER A RUSTIC BRIDGE. AT BACK THE FARMHOUSE AMONG TREES. IN THE DISTANCE A CHURCH SPIRE

DOBSON *and* DORA

Dobson. So the owd uncle i' Coomberland be deäd, Miss Dora, beänt he?

Dora. Yes, Mr. Dobson, I 've been attending on his death-bed and his burial.

Dobson. It be five year sin' ye went afoor to him, and it seems to me nobbut t' other day. Hes n't he left ye nowt?

Dora. No, Mr. Dobson.

Dobson. But he were mighty fond o' ye, warn't he?

Dora. Fonder of poor Eva — like everybody else.

Dobson (*handing* Dora *basket of roses*). Not like me, Miss Dora; and I ha' browt these roses to ye — I forgits what they calls 'em, but I hallus gi'ed soom on 'em to Miss Eva at this time o' year. Will ya taäke 'em? fur Miss Eva, she set the bush by my dairy winder afoor she went to school at Littlechester — so I allus browt soom on 'em to

her; and now she be gone, will ye taäke 'em, Miss Dora?

Dora. I thank you. They tell me that yesterday you mentioned her name too suddenly before my father. See that you do not do so again!

Dobson. Noä; I knaws a deäl better now. I seed how the owd man wur vext.

Dora. I take them, then, for Eva's sake.

[*Takes basket, places some in her dress.*

Dobson. Eva's saäke. Yeäs. Poor gell, poor gell! I can't abeär to think on 'er now, fur I 'd ha' done owt fur 'er mysen; an' ony o' Steer's men, an' ony o' my men 'ud ha' done owt fur 'er, an' all the parish 'ud ha' done owt fur 'er, fur we was all on us proud on 'er, an' them theer be soom of her oän roses, an' she wur as sweet as ony on 'em — the Lord bless 'er — 'er oän sen; an' weänt ye taäke 'em now, Miss Dora, fur 'er saäke an' fur my saäke an' all?

Dora. Do you want them back again?

Dobson. Noä, noä! Keep 'em. But I hed a word to saäy to ye.

Dora. Why, Farmer, you should be in the hayfield looking after your men; you could n't have more splendid weather.

Dobson. I be a going theer; but I thowt I 'd bring tha them roses fust. The weather 's well anew, but the glass be a bit shaäky. S'iver we 've led moäst on it.

Dora. Ay! but you must not be too sudden with it either, as you were last year, when you put it in green, and your stack caught fire.

Dobson. I were insured, Miss, an' I lost nowt by it. But I weänt be too sudden wi' it; and I feel sewer, Miss Dora, that I ha' been noän too sudden wi' you, fur I ha' sarved fer ye well nigh as long as the man sarved for 'is sweet'art i' Scriptur'. Weänt ye gi'e me a kind answer at last?

Dora. I have no thought of marriage, my friend. We have been in such grief these five years, not only on my sister's account, but the ill success of the farm, and the debts, and my father's breaking down, and his blindness. How could I think of leaving him?

Dobson. Eh, but I be well to do; and if ye would nobbut hev me, I would taäke the owd blind man to my oän fireside. You should hev him allus wi' ye.

Dora. You are generous, but it cannot be. I cannot love you; nay, I think I never can be brought to love any man. It seems to me that I hate men, ever since my sister left us. O, see here. (*Pulls out a letter.*) I wear it next my heart. Poor sister, I had it five years ago. 'Dearest Dora, — I have lost myself, and am lost for ever to you and my poor father. I thought Mr. Edgar the best of men, and he has proved himself the worst. Seek not for me, or you may find me at the bottom of the river. — EVA.'

Dobson. Be that my fault?

Dora. No; but how should I, with this grief still at my heart, take to the milking of your cows, the fatting of your calves, the making of your butter, and the managing of your poultry?

Dobson. Naäy, but I hev an owd woman as 'ud see to all that; and you should sit i' your oän parlor quite like a laädy, ye should!

Dora. It cannot be.

Dobson. And plaäy the pianner, if ye liked, all daäy long, like a laädy, ye should an' all.

Dora. It cannot be.

Dobson. And I would loove tha moor nor ony gentleman 'ud loove tha.

Dora. No, no; it cannot be.

Dobson. And p'raps ye hears 'at I soomtimes taäkes a drop too much; but that be all along o' you, Miss, because ye weänt hev me; but, if ye would, I could put all that o' one side eäsy anew.

Dora. Cannot you understand plain words, Mr. Dobson? I tell you, it cannot be.

Dobson. Eh, lass! Thy feyther eddicated his darters to marry gentlefoälk, and see what 's coomed on it.

Dora. That is enough, Farmer Dobson. You have shown me that, though fortune had born *you* into the estate of a gentleman, you would still have been Farmer Dobson. You had better attend to your hay-field. Good afternoon. [*Exit.*

Dobson. 'Farmer Dobson!' Well, I be Farmer Dobson; but I thinks Farmer Dobson's dog 'ud ha' knaw'd better nor to cast her sister's misfortin inter 'er teeth arter she 'd been a-reädin' me the letter wi' 'er voice a-shaäkin', and the drop in 'er eye. Theer she goäs! Shall I foller 'er and ax 'er to maäke it up? Noä, not yet. Let 'er cool upon it; I likes 'er all the better fur taäkin' me down, like a laädy, as she be. Farmer Dobson! I be Farmer Dobson, sewer anew; but if iver I cooms upo' Gentleman Hedgar ageän, and doänt laäy my cartwhip athurt 'is shou'ders, why then I beänt Farmer Dobson, but summun else — blaäme 't if I beänt!

Enter HAYMAKERS *with a load of hay*

The last on it, eh?

First Haymaker. Yeäs.

Dobson. Hoäm wi' it, then. [*Exit surlily.*

First Haymaker. Well, it be the last loäd hoäm.

Second Haymaker. Yeäs, an' owd Dobson should be glad on it. What maäkes 'im allus sa glum?

Sally Allen. Glum! he be wuss nor glum. He coom'd up to me yisterdaäy i' the haäy-field, when meä and my sweet'art was a-workin' along o' one side wi' one another, and he sent 'im awaäy to t' other end o' the field; and when I axed 'im why, he telled me 'at sweet'arts niver worked well togither; and I telled *'im* 'at sweet'arts allus worked

best togither; and then he called me a rude naäme, and I can't abide 'im.

James. Why, lass, doänt tha knaw he be sweet upo' Dora Steer, and she weänt sa much as look at 'im? And wheniver 'e sees two sweet'arts togither like thou and me, Sally, he be fit to bust hissen wi' spites and jalousies.

Sally. Let 'm bust hissen, then, for owt *I* cares.

First Haymaker. Well, but, as I said afoor, it be the last loäd hoäm; do thou and thy sweet'art sing us hoäm to supper — 'The Last Loäd Hoäm.'

All. Ay! 'The Last Loäd Hoäm.'

SONG

What did ye do, and what did ye saäy,
Wi' the wild white rose, an' the woodbine sa gaäy,
An' the midders all mow'd, an' the sky sa blue —
What did ye saäy, and what did ye do,
When ye thowt there were nawbody watchin' o' you,
And you an' your Sally was forkin' the haäy,
At the end of the daäy,
For the last loäd hoäm?

What did we do, and what did we saäy,
Wi' the briar sa green, an' the willer sa graäy,
An' the midders all mow'd, an' the sky sa blue —
Do ye think I be gawin' to tell it to you,
What we mowt saäy, and what we mowt do,
When me an' my Sally was forkin' the haäy,
At the end of the daäy,
For the last loäd hoäm?

But what did ye saäy, and what did ye do,
Wi' the butterflies out, and the swallers at plaäy,
An' the midders all mow'd, an' the sky sa blue?
Why, coom then, owd feller, I 'll tell it to you;
For me an' my Sally we sweär'd to be true,
To be true to each other, let 'appen what maäy,
Till the end of the daäy,
And the last loäd hoäm.

All. Well sung!

James. Fanny be the naäme i' the song, but I swopt it fur *she.* [*Pointing to* Sally.

Sally. Let ma aloän afoor foälk, wilt tha?

First Haymaker. Ye shall sing that ageän to-night, fur owd Dobson 'll gi'e us a bit o' supper.

Sally. I weänt goä to owd Dobson; he wur rude to me i' tha haäy-field, and he 'll be rude to me ageän to-night. Owd Steer 's gotten all his grass down and wants a hand, and I 'll goä to him.

First Haymaker. Owd Steer gi'es nubbut cowd tea to *'is* men, and owd Dobson gi'es beer.

Sally. But I 'd like owd Steer's cowd tea better nor Dobson's beer. Good-bye. [*Going.*

James. Gi'e us a buss fust, lass.

Sally. I tell'd tha to let ma aloän!

James. Why, was n't thou and me a-bussin' o' one another t' other side o' the haäycock, when owd Dobson coom'd upo' us? I can't let tha aloän if I would, Sally.

[*Offering to kiss her.*

Sally. Git along wi' ye, do! [*Exit.*

[*All laugh; exeunt singing.*

To be true to each other, let 'appen what maäy,
Till the end o' the daäy,
An' the last loäd hoäm.

Enter HAROLD

Harold. Not Harold! 'Philip Edgar, Philip Edgar!'
Her phantom call'd me by the name she loved.
I told her I should hear her from the grave.
Ay! yonder is her casement. I remember
Her bright face beaming starlike down upon me
Thro' that rich cloud of blossom. Since I left her
Here weeping, I have ranged the world, and sat
Thro' every sensual course of that full feast
That leaves but emptiness.

SONG

To be true to each other, let 'appen what maäy,
To the end o' the daäy,
An' the last loäd hoäm.

Harold. Poor Eva! O my God, if man be only
A willy-nilly current of sensations —
Reaction needs must follow revel — yet —
Why feel remorse, he, knowing that he *must* have
Moved in the iron grooves of Destiny?

Remorse then is a part of Destiny,
Nature a liar, making us feel guilty
Of her own faults.
My grandfather — of him
They say, that women —
O, this mortal house,
Which we are born into, is haunted by
The ghosts of the dead passions of dead men;
And these take flesh again with our own flesh,
And bring us to confusion.
He was only
A poor philosopher who call'd the mind
Of children a blank page, a *tabula rasa.*
There, there, is written in invisible inks
'Lust, Prodigality, Covetousness, Craft,
Cowardice, Murder' — and the heat and fire
Of life will bring them out, and black enough,
So the child grow to manhood. Better death
With our first wail than life —

SONG (*further off*)

Till the end o' the daäy,
An' the last loäd hoäm,
Loäd hoäm.

This bridge again! (*Steps on the bridge.*)
How often have I stood
With Eva here! The brook among its flowers!
Forget-me-not, meadow-sweet, willow-herb.
I had some smattering of science then,

Taught her the learned names, anatomized
The flowers for her — and now I only wish
This pool were deep enough, that I might plunge
And lose myself for ever.

Enter DAN SMITH (*singing*)

Gee oop! whoä! Gee oop! whoä!
Scizzars an' Pumpy was good uns to goä
Thruf slush an' squad
When roäds was bad,
But hallus 'ud stop at the Vine-an'-the-Hop,
Fur boäth on 'em knawed as well as mysen
That beer be as good fur 'erses as men.
Gee oop! whoä! Gee oop! whoä!
Scizzars an' Pumpy was good uns to goä.

The beer 's gotten oop into my 'eäd. S'iver I mun git along back to the farm, fur she tell'd ma to taäke the cart to Littlechester.

Enter DORA

Dora. Half an hour late! why are you loitering here? Away with you at once.

[*Exit* Dan Smith.

(*Seeing* Harold *on bridge*). Some madman, is it,
Gesticulating there upon the bridge?
I am half afraid to pass.

Harold. Sometimes I wonder,
When man has surely learnt at last that all
His old-world faith, the blossom of his youth,

Has faded, falling fruitless — whether then
All of us, all at once, may not be seized
With some fierce passion, not so much for Death
As against Life! all, all, into the dark —
No more! — and science now could drug and balm us
Back into nescience with as little pain
As it is to fall asleep.
This beggarly life,
This poor, flat, hedged-in field — no distance — this
Hollow Pandora-box,
With all the pleasures flown, not even Hope
Left at the bottom!
Superstitious fool,
What brought me here? To see her grave? her ghost?
Her ghost is everyway about me here.

Dora (*coming forward*). Allow me, sir, to pass you.

Harold. Eva!

Dora. Eva!

Harold. What are you? Where do you come from?

Dora. From the farm
Here, close at hand.

Harold. Are you — you are — that Dora,
The sister. I have heard of you. The likeness
Is very striking.

Dora. You knew Eva, then?

Harold. Yes — I was thinking of her when — O, yes,
Many years back, and never since have met
Her equal for pure innocence of nature,
And loveliness of feature.

Dora. No, nor I.

Harold. Except, indeed, I have found it once again
In your own self.

Dora. You flatter me. Dear Eva
Was always thought the prettier.

Harold. And *her* charm
Of voice is also yours; and I was brooding
Upon a great unhappiness when you spoke.

Dora. Indeed, you seem'd in trouble, sir.

Harold. And you
Seem my good angel who may help me from it.

Dora (*aside*). How worn he looks, poor man! who is it, I wonder.
How can I help him? (*Aloud.*) Might I ask your name?

Harold. Harold.

Dora. I never heard her mention you.

Harold. I met her first at a farm in Cumberland —
Her uncle's.

Dora. She was there six years ago.

Harold. And if she never mention'd me, perhaps

The painful circumstances which I heard —
I will not vex you by repeating them —
Only last week at Littlechester, drove me
From out her memory. She has disappear'd,
They told me, from the farm — and darker news.

Dora. She has disappear'd, poor darling, from the world —
Left but one dreadful line to say, that we
Should find her in the river; and we dragg'd
The Littlechester river all in vain,
Have sorrow'd for her all these years in vain.
And my poor father, utterly broken down
By losing her — she was his favorite child —
Has let his farm, all his affairs, I fear,
But for the slender help that I can give,
Fall into ruin. Ah! that villain, Edgar,
If he should ever show his face among us,
Our men and boys would hoot him, stone him, hunt him
With pitchforks off the farm, for all of them
Loved her, and she was worthy of all love.

Harold. They say, we should forgive our enemies.

Dora. Ay, if the wretch were dead I might forgive him;
We know not whether he be dead or living.

Harold. What Edgar?

Dora. Philip Edgar of Toft Hall
In Somerset. Perhaps you know him?

Harold. Slightly.
(*Aside*). Ay, for how slightly have I known myself!
Dora. This Edgar, then, is living?
Harold. Living? well —
One Philip Edgar of Toft Hall in Somerset
Is lately dead.
Dora. Dead! — is there more than one?
Harold. Nay — now — not one, (*aside*) for I am
Philip Harold.
Dora. That one, is he then — dead!
Harold (*aside*). My father's death,
Let her believe it mine; this, for the moment,
Will leave me a free field.
Dora. Dead! and this world
Is brighter for his absence, as that other
Is darker for his presence.
Harold. Is not this
To speak too pitilessly of the dead?
Dora. My five-years' anger cannot die at once,
Not all at once with death and him. I trust
I shall forgive him — by and by — not now.
O sir, you seem to have a heart; if you
Had seen us that wild morning when we found
Her bed unslept in, storm and shower lashing
Her casement, her poor spaniel wailing for her,
That desolate letter, blotted with her tears,
Which told us we should never see her more —
Our old nurse crying as if for her own child,
My father stricken with his first paralysis,

And then with blindness — had you been one of us
And seen all this, then you would know it is not
So easy to forgive — even the dead.

Harold. But sure am I that of your gentleness
You will forgive him. She you mourn for seem'd
A miracle of gentleness — would not blur
A moth's wing by the touching; would not crush
The fly that drew her blood; and, were she living,
Would not — if penitent — have denied him *her*
Forgiveness. And perhaps the man himself,
When hearing of that piteous death, has suffer'd
More than we know. But wherefore waste your heart
In looking on a chill and changeless past?
Iron will fuse, and marble melt; the past
Remains the past. But you are young, and — pardon me —
As lovely as your sister. Who can tell
What golden hours, with what full hands, may be
Waiting you in the distance? Might I call
Upon your father — I have seen the world —
And cheer his blindness with a traveller's tales?

Dora. Call if you will, and when you will. I cannot
Well answer for my father; but if you
Can tell me anything of our sweet Eva
When in her brighter girlhood, I at least
Will bid you welcome, and will listen to you.
Now I must go.

Harold. But give me first your hand;
I do not dare, like an old friend, to shake it.
I kiss it as a prelude to that privilege
When you shall know me better.

Dora (*aside.*) How beautiful
His manners are, and how unlike the farmer's!
You are staying here?

Harold. Yes, at the wayside inn
Close by that alder-island in your brook,
'The Angler's Home.'

Dora. Are *you* one?

Harold. No, but I
Take some delight in sketching, and the country
Has many charms, altho' the inhabitants
Seem semi-barbarous.

Dora. I am glad it pleases you;
Yet I, born here, not only love the country,
But its inhabitants too; and you, I doubt not,
Would take to them as kindly, if you cared
To live some time among them.

Harold. If I did,
Then one at least of its inhabitants
Might have more charm for me than all the country.

Dora. That one, then, should be grateful for your preference.

Harold. I cannot tell, tho' standing in her presence.
(*Aside.*) She colors!

Dora. Sir!

Harold. Be not afraid of me,
For these are no conventional flourishes.
I do most earnestly assure you that
Your likeness — [*Shouts and cries without.*

Dora. What was that? my poor blind father —

Enter FARMING MAN

Farming Man. Miss Dora, Dan Smith's cart hes runned ower a laädy i' the holler laäne, and they ha' ta'en the body up inter your chaumber, and they be all a-callin' for ye.

Dora. The body! — Heavens! I come!

Harold. But you are trembling.
Allow me to go with you to the farm. [*Exeunt.*

Enter DOBSON

Dobson. What feller wur it as 'a' been a-talkin' fur haäfe an hour wi' my Dora? (*Looking after him.*) Seeäms I ommost knaws the back on 'im — drest like a gentleman, too. Damn all gentlemen, says I! I should ha' thowt they 'd hed anew o' gentlefoälk, as I telled 'er to-daäy when she fell foul upo' me.

Minds ma o' summun. I could sweär to that; but that be all one, fur I haätes 'im afoor I knaws what 'e be. Theer! he turns round. Philip Hedgar o' Soomerset! Philip Hedgar o' Soomerset! — Noä — yeäs — thaw the feller 's gone and maäde such a litter of his faäce.

Eh lad, if it be thou, I'll Philip tha! a-plaäyin' the saäme gaäme wi' my Dora — I'll Soomerset tha!

I'd like to drag 'im thruff the herse-pond, and she to be a-lookin' at it. I'd like to leather 'im black and blue, and she to be a-laughin' at it. I'd like to fell 'im as deäd as a bullock! (*Clenching his fist.*)

But what 'ud she saäy to that? She telled me once not to meddle wi' 'im, and now she be fallen out wi' ma, and I can't coom at 'er.

It mun be *him*. Noä! Fur she'd niver 'a' been talkin' haäfe an hour wi' the divil 'at killed her oän sister, or she beänt Dora Steer.

Yeäs! Fur she niver knawed 'is faäce when 'e wur 'ere afoor; but I'll maäke 'er knaw! I'll maäke 'er knaw!

Enter HAROLD

Naäy, but I mun git out on 'is waäy now, or I shall be the death on 'im. [*Exit.*

Harold. How the clown glared at me! that
Dobbins, is it,
With whom I used to jar? but can he trace me
Thro' five years' absence, and my change of name,
The tan of Southern summers and the beard?
I may as well avoid him.
Ladylike!
Lilylike in her stateliness and sweetness!

How came she by it? — a daughter of the fields,
This Dora!
She gave her hand, unask'd, at the farm gate;
I almost think she half return'd the pressure
Of mine. What, I that held the orange blossom
Dark as the yew? but may not those, who march
Before their age, turn back at times, and make
Courtesy to custom? and now the stronger motive,
Misnamed free-will — the crowd would call it conscience —
Moves me — to what? I am dreaming; for the past
Look'd thro' the present, Eva's eyes thro' hers —
A spell upon me! Surely I loved Eva
More than I knew! or is it but the past
That brightens in retiring? O, last night
Tired, pacing my new lands at Littlechester,
I dozed upon the bridge, and the black river
Flow'd thro' my dreams — if dreams they were. She rose
From the foul flood and pointed toward the farm,
And her cry rang to me across the years,
'I call you, Philip Edgar, Philip Edgar!
Come, you will set all right again, and father
Will not die miserable.' I could make his age
A comfort to him — so be more at peace
With mine own self. Some of my former friends
Would find my logic faulty; let them. Color
Flows thro' my life again, and I have lighted
On a new pleasure. Anyhow we must

Move in the line of least resistance when
The stronger motive rules.
But she hates Edgar.
May not this Dobbins, or some other, spy
Edgar in Harold? Well then, I must make her
Love Harold first, and then she will forgive
Edgar for Harold's sake. She said herself
She would forgive him, by and by, not now —
For her own sake *then*, if not for mine — not now —
But by and by.

Enter Dobson *behind*

Dobson. By and by — eh, lad, dosta knaw this paäper? Ye dropt it upo' the road. 'Philip Edgar, Esq.' Ay, you be a pretty squire. I ha' fun' ye out, I hev. Eh, lad, dosta knaw what tha meäns wi' by and by? Fur if ye be goin' to sarve our Dora as ye sarved our Eva — then, by and by, if she weänt listen to me when I be a-tryin' to saäve 'er — if she weänt — look to thysen, for, by the Lord, I 'd think na moor o' maäkin' an end o' tha nor a carrion craw — noä — thaw they hanged ma at 'Size fur it.

Harold. Dobbins, I think!

Dobson. I beänt Dobbins.

Harold. Nor am I Edgar, my good fellow.

Dobson. Tha lies! What hasta been saäyin' to *my* Dora?

Harold. I have been telling her of the death of one Philip Edgar of Toft Hall, Somerset.

Dobson. Tha lies!

Harold (*pulling out a newspaper*). Well, my man, it seems that you can read. Look there — under the deaths.

Dobson. 'O' the 17th, Philip Edgar, o' Toft Hall, Soomerset.' How coom thou to be sa like 'im, then?

Harold. Naturally enough; for I am closely related to the dead man's family.

Dobson. An' 'ow coom thou by the letter to 'im?

Harold. Naturally again; for, as I used to transact all his business for him, I had to look over his letters. Now then, see these (*takes out letters*). Half a score of them, all directed to me — Harold.

Dobson. 'Arold! 'Arold! 'Arold, so they be.

Harold. My name is Harold! Good day, Dobbins! [*Exit.*

Dobson. 'Arold! The feller 's cleän daäzed, an' maäzed, an' maäted, an' muddled ma. Deäd! It mun be true, fur it wur i' print as black as owt. Naäy, but 'Good daäy, Dobbins.' Why, that wur the very twang on 'im. Eh, lad, but whether thou be Hedgar, or Hedgar's business man, thou hes n't naw business 'ere wi' *my* Dora, as I knaws on, an' whether thou calls thysen Hedgar or Harold, if thou stick to she I 'll stick to thee — stick to tha like a weasel to a rabbit, I will. Ay! and I 'd like to shoot tha like a rabbit an' all. 'Good daäy, Dobbins.' Dang tha!

ACT III

SCENE.—A ROOM IN STEER'S HOUSE. DOOR LEADING INTO BEDROOM AT THE BACK

Dora (*ringing a handbell*). Milly!

Enter MILLY

Milly. The little 'ymn? Yeäs, Miss; but I wur so ta'en up wi' leädin' the owd man about all the blessed murnin' 'at I ha' nobbut larned mysen haäfe on it.

O man, forgive thy mortal foe,
Nor ever strike him blow for blow;
For all the souls on earth that live
To be forgiven must forgive.
Forgive him seventy times and seven;
For all the blessed souls in heaven
Are both forgivers and forgiven.

But I 'll git the book ageän, and larn mysen the rest, and saäy it to ye afoor dark; ye ringed fur that, Miss, did n't ye?

Dora. No, Milly; but if the farming-men be come for their wages, to send them up to me.

Milly. Yeäs, Miss. [*Exit.*

Dora (*sitting at desk counting money*). Enough at any rate for the present. (*Enter* Farming Men.) Good afternoon, my friends. I am sorry Mr. Steer still continues too unwell to attend to you, but the schoolmaster looked to the paying you your wages when I was away, did n't he?

Men. Yeäs; and thanks to ye.

Dora. Some of our workmen have left us, but he sent me an alphabetical list of those that remain, so, Allen, I may as well begin with you.

Allen (*with his hand to his ear*). Halfabitical! Taäke one o' the young uns fust, Miss, fur I be a bit deaf, and I wur hallus scaäred by a big word; leastwaäys, I should be wi' a lawyer.

Dora. I spoke of your names, Allen, as they are arranged here (*shows book*) — according to their first letters.

Allen. Letters! Yeäs, I see now. Them be what they larns the childer' at school, but I were burn afoor schoolin'-time.

Dora. But, Allen, tho' you can't read, you could whitewash that cottage of yours where your grandson had the fever.

Allen. I 'll hev it done o' Monday.

Dora. Else if the fever spread, the parish will have to thank you for it.

Allen. Meä? why, it be the Lord's doin', noän o' mine; d 'ye think *I 'd* gi'e 'em the fever? But I thanks ye all the saäme, Miss. (*Takes money.*)

Dora (*calling out names*). Higgins, Jackson, Luscombe, Nokes, Oldham, Skipworth! (*All take money.*) Did you find that you worked at all the worse upon the cold tea than you would have done upon the beer?

Higgins. Noä, Miss; we worked naw wuss upo' the cowd tea; but we 'd ha' worked better upo' the beer.

Dora. Come, come, you worked well enough, and I am much obliged to all of you. There 's for you, and you, and you. Count the money and see if it 's all right.

Men. All right, Miss; and thank ye kindly.

[*Exeunt* Luscombe, Nokes, Oldham, Skipworth.

Dora. Dan Smith, my father and I forgave you stealing our coals.

[Dan Smith *advances to* Dora.

Dan Smith (*bellowing*). Whoy, O lor, Miss! that wur sa long back, and the walls sa thin, and the winders brokken, and the weather sa cowd, and my missus a-gittin' ower 'er lyin'-in.

Dora. Did n't I say that we had forgiven you? But, Dan Smith, they tell me that you — and you have six children — spent all your last Saturday's wages at the ale-house; that you were stupid drunk all Sunday, and so ill in consequence all Monday that you did not come into the hay-field. Why should I pay you your full wages?

Dan Smith. I be ready to taäke the pledge.

Dora. And as ready to break it again. Besides, it was you that were driving the cart — and I fear you were tipsy then, too — when you lamed the lady in the hollow lane.

Dan Smith (*bellowing*). O lor, Miss! noä, noä, noä! Ye sees the holler laäne be hallus sa dark i' the arternoon, and wheere the big esh-tree cuts athurt it, it gi'es a turn like, and 'ow should I see to laäme the laädy, and meä coomin' along pretty sharp an' all?

Dora. Well, there are your wages; the next time you waste them at a pot-house you get no more from me. (*Exit* Dan Smith.) Sally Allen, you worked for Mr. Dobson, did n't you?

Sally (*advancing*). Yeäs, Miss; but he wur so rough wi' ma, I could n't abide 'im.

Dora. Why should he be rough with you? You are as good as a man in the hay-field. What 's become of your brother?

Sally. 'Listed for a soädger, Miss, i' the Queen's Real Hard Tillery.

Dora. And your sweetheart — when are you and he to be married?

Sally. At Michaelmas, Miss, please God.

Dora. You are an honest pair. I will come to your wedding.

Sally. An' I thanks ye fur that, Miss, moor nor fur the waäge.

(*Going — returns.*) 'A cotched ma about the waäist, Miss, when 'e wur 'ere afoor, an' axed ma to be 'is little sweet'art, an' soä I knaw'd 'im when I seed 'im ageän an' I telled feyther on 'im.

Dora. What is all this, Allen?

Allen. Why, Miss Dora, meä and my maätes, us three, we wants to hev three words wi' ye.

Higgins. That be 'im, and meä, Miss.

Jackson. An' meä, Miss.

Allen. An' we weänt mention naw naämes, we 'd as lief talk o' the divil afoor ye as 'im, fur they says the master goäs cleän off his 'eäd when he 'eärs the naäme on 'im; but us three, arter Sally 'd telled us on 'im, we fun' 'im out a-walkin' i' West Field wi' a white 'at, nine o'clock, upo' Tuesday murnin', and all on us, wi' your leave, we wants to leather 'im.

Dora. Who?

Allen. Him as did the mischief here, five year' sin'.

Dora. Mr. Edgar?

Allen. Theer, Miss! You ha' naämed 'im — not me.

Dora. He 's dead, man — dead; gone to his account — dead and buried.

Allen. I beänt sa sewer o' that, fur Sally knaw'd 'im. Now then?

Dora. Yes; it was in the Somersetshire papers.

Allen. Then yon mun be his brother, an' we 'll leather '*im*.

Dora. I never heard that he had a brother. Some foolish mistake of Sally's; but what! would you beat a man for his brother's fault? That were a wild justice indeed. Let bygones be bygones. Go home! Good-night! (*All exeunt.*) I have once more paid them all. The work of the farm will go on still, but for how long? We are almost at the bottom of the well: little more to be drawn from it — and what then? Encumbered as we are, who would lend us anything? We shall have to sell all the land, which father, for a whole life, has been getting together, again, and that, I am sure, would be the death of him. What am I to do? Farmer Dobson, were I to marry him, has promised to keep our heads above water; and the man has doubtless a good heart, and a true and lasting love for me; yet — though I can be sorry for him — as the good Sally says, 'I can't abide him' — almost brutal, and matched with my Harold is like a hedge thistle by a garden rose. But then, he, too — will he ever be of one faith with his wife? which is my dream of a true marriage. Can I fancy him kneeling with me, and uttering the same prayer; standing up side by side with me, and singing the same hymn? I fear not. Have I done wisely, then, in accepting him? But may not a girl's love-dream have too much romance in it to be realized all at once, or altogether, or anywhere but in heaven? And yet I had once a vision

of a pure and perfect marriage, where the man and the woman, only differing as the stronger and the weaker, should walk hand in hand together down this valley of tears, as they call it so truly, to the grave at the bottom, and lie down there together in the darkness which would seem but for a moment, to be wakened again together by the light of the resurrection, and no more partings for ever and for ever. (*Walks up and down. She sings.*)

O happy lark, that warblest high
Above thy lowly nest,
O brook, that brawlest merrily by
Thro' fields that once were blest,
O tower spiring to the sky,
O graves in daisies drest,
O Love and Life, how weary am I,
And how I long for rest!

There, there, I am a fool! Tears! I have sometimes been moved to tears by a chapter of fine writing in a novel; but what have I to do with tears now? All depends on me — father, this poor girl, the farm, everything; and they both love me — I am all in all to both; and he loves me too, I am quite sure of that. Courage, courage! and all will go well. (*Goes to bedroom door; opens it.*) How dark your room is! Let me bring you in here where there is still full daylight. (*Brings* Eva *forward.*) Why, you look better.

Eva. And I feel so much better that I trust I may be able by and by to help you in the business of the farm; but I must not be known yet. Has any one found me out, Dora?

Dora. O, no; you kept your veil too close for that when they carried you in; since then, no one has seen you but myself.

Eva. Yes — this Milly.

Dora. Poor blind father's little guide, Milly, who came to us three years after you were gone, how should she know you? But now that you have been brought to us as it were from the grave, dearest Eva, and have been here so long, will you not speak with father to-day?

Eva. Do you think that I may? No, not yet. I am not equal to it yet.

Dora. Why? Do you still suffer from your fall in the hollow lane?

Eva. Bruised; but no bones broken.

Dora. I have always told father that the huge old ash-tree there would cause an accident some day; but he would never cut it down, because one of the Steers had planted it there in former times.

Eva. If it had killed one of the Steers there the other day, it might have been better for her, for him, and for you.

Dora. Come, come, keep a good heart! Better for me! That 's good. How better for me?

Eva. You tell me you have a lover. Will he not fly from you if he learn the story of my shame and that I am still living?

Dora. No; I am sure that when we are married he will be willing that you and father should live with us; for, indeed, he tells me that he met you once in the old times, and was much taken with you, my dear.

Eva. Taken with me; who was he? Have you told him I am here?

Dora. No; do you wish it?

Eva. See, Dora; you yourself are ashamed of me (*weeps*), and I do not wonder at it.

Dora. But I should wonder at myself if it were so. Have we not been all in all to one another from the time when we first peeped into the bird's nest, waded in the brook, ran after the butterflies, and prattled to each other that we would marry fine gentlemen, and played at being fine ladies?

Eva. That last was my father's fault, poor man. And this lover of yours — this Mr. Harold — is a gentleman?

Dora. That he is, from head to foot. I do believe I lost my heart to him the very first time we met, and I love him so much —

Eva. Poor Dora!

Dora. That I dare not tell him how much I love him.

Eva. Better not. Has he offered you marriage, this gentleman?

Dora. Could I love him else?

Eva. And are you quite sure that after marriage this gentleman will not be shamed of his poor farmer's daughter among the ladies in his drawing-room?

Dora. Shamed of me in a drawing-room! Was n't Miss Vavasour, our schoolmistress at Littlechester, a lady born? Were not our fellow-pupils all ladies? Was n't dear mother herself at least by one side a lady? Can't I speak like a lady; pen a letter like a lady; talk a little French like a lady; play a little like a lady? Can't a girl when she loves her husband, and he her, make herself anything he wishes her to be? Shamed of me in a drawing-room, indeed! See here! 'I hope your lordship is quite recovered of your gout?' (*Curtsies.*) 'Will your ladyship ride to cover to-day? (*Curtsies.*) I can recommend our Voltigeur.' 'I am sorry that we could not attend your grace's party on the 10th!' (*Curtsies.*) There, I am glad my nonsense has made you smile!

Eva. I have heard that 'your lordship,' and 'your ladyship,' and 'your grace' are all growing old-fashioned!

Dora. But the love of sister for sister can never be old-fashioned. I have been unwilling to trouble you with questions, but you seem somewhat

better to-day. We found a letter in your bedroom torn into bits. I could n't make it out. What was it?

Eva. From him! from him! He said we had been most happy together, and he trusted that some time we should meet again, for he had not forgotten his promise to come when I called him. But that was a mockery, you know, for he gave me no address, and there was no word of marriage; and, O Dora, he signed himself 'Yours gratefully'—fancy, Dora, 'gratefully'! 'Yours gratefully'!

Dora. Infamous wretch! (*Aside.*) Shall I tell her he is dead? No; she is still too feeble.

Eva. Hark! Dora, some one is coming. I cannot and I will not see anybody.

Dora. It is only Milly.

Enter MILLY, *with basket of roses*

Well, Milly, why do you come in so roughly? The sick lady here might have been asleep.

Milly. Pleäse, Miss, Mr. Dobson telled me to saäy he 's browt some of Miss Eva's roses for the sick laädy to smell on.

Dora. Take them, dear. Say that the sick lady thanks him! Is he here?

Milly. Yeäs, Miss; and he wants to speak to ye partic'lar.

Dora. Tell him I cannot leave the sick lady just yet.

Milly. Yeäs, Miss; but he says he wants to tell ye summut very partic'lar.

Dora. Not to-day. What are you staying for?

Milly. Why, Miss, I be afeard I shall set him a-sweäring like onythink.

Dora. And what harm will that do you, so that you do not copy his bad manners? Go, child. (*Exit* Milly.) But, Eva, why did you write 'Seek me at the bottom of the river'?

Eva. Why? because I meant it! — that dreadful night! that lonely walk to Littlechester, the rain beating in my face all the way, dead midnight when I came upon the bridge; the river, black, slimy, swirling under me in the lamplight, by the rotten wharfs — but I was so mad that I mounted upon the parapet —

Dora. You make me shudder!

Eva. To fling myself over, when I heard a voice, 'Girl, what are you doing there?' It was a Sister of Mercy, come from the death-bed of a pauper, who had died in his misery blessing God, and the Sister took me to her house, and bit by bit — for she promised secrecy — I told her all.

Dora. And what then?

Eva. She would have persuaded me to come back here, but I could n't. Then she got me a place as nursery governess, and when the children grew too old for me, and I asked her once more to help me, once more she said, 'Go home;' but I

had n't the heart or face to do it. And then — what would father say? — I sank so low that I went into service — the drudge of a lodging-house — and when the mistress died, and I appealed to the Sister again, her answer — I think I have it about me — yes, there it is!

Dora (*reads*). 'My dear Child, — I can do no more for you. I have done wrong in keeping your secret; your father must be now in extreme old age. Go back to him and ask his forgiveness before he dies. — SISTER AGATHA.' Sister Agatha is right. Don't you long for father's forgiveness?

Eva. I would almost die to have it!

Dora. And he may die before he gives it; may drop off any day, any hour. You must see him at once. (*Rings bell. Enter* Milly.) Milly, my dear, how did you leave Mr. Steer?

Milly. He 's been a-moänin' and a-groänin' in 'is sleep, but I thinks he be wakkenin' oop.

Dora. Tell him that I and the lady here wish to see him. You see she is lamed, and cannot go down to him.

Milly. Yeäs, Miss, I will. [*Exit* Milly.

Dora. I ought to prepare you. You must not expect to find our father as he was five years ago. He is much altered; but I trust that your return — for you know, my dear, you were always his favorite — will give him, as they say, a new lease of life.

Eva (*clinging to* Dora). O, Dora, Dora!

Enter STEER *led by* MILLY

Steer. Hes the cow cawved?

Dora. No, father.

Steer. Be the colt deäd?

Dora. No, father.

Steer. He wur sa bellows'd out wi' the wind this murnin', 'at I tell'd 'em to gallop 'im. Be he deäd?

Dora. Not that I know.

Steer. What hasta sent fur me, then, fur?

Dora (*taking* Steer's *arm*). Well, father, I have a surprise for you.

Steer. I ha' niver been surprised but once i' my life, and I went blind upon it.

Dora. Eva has come home.

Steer. Hoäm? fro' the bottom o' the river?

Dora. No, father, that was a mistake. She 's here again.

Steer. The Steers was all gentlefoälks i' the owd times, an' I worked early an' laäte to maäke 'em all gentlefoälks ageän. The land belonged to the Steers i' the owd times, an' it belongs to the Steers ageän: I bowt it back ageän; but I could n't buy my darter back ageän when she lost hersen, could I? I eddicated boäth on 'em to marry gentlemen, an' one on 'em went an' lost hersen i' the river.

Dora. No, father, she 's here.

Steer. Here! she moänt coom here. What would her mother saäy? If it be her ghoäst, we mun abide it. We can't keep a ghoäst out.

Eva (*falling at his feet*). O, forgive me! forgive me!

Steer. Who said that? Taäke me awaäy, little gell. It be one o' my bad daäys.

[*Exit*. Steer *led by* Milly.

Dora (*smoothing* Eva's *forehead*). Be not so cast down, my sweet Eva. You heard him say it was one of his bad days. He will be sure to know you to-morrow.

Eva. It is almost the last of my bad days, I think. I am very faint. I must lie down. Give me your arm. Lead me back again.

[Dora *takes* Eva *into inner room*.

Enter MILLY

Milly. Miss Dora! Miss Dora!

Dora (*returning and leaving the bedroom door ajar*). Quiet! Quiet! What is it?

Milly. Mr. 'Arold, Miss.

Dora. Below?

Milly. Yeäs, Miss. He be saäyin' a word to the owd man, but he 'll coom up if ye lets 'im.

Dora. Tell him, then, that I 'm waiting for him.

Milly. Yeäs, Miss.

[*Exit*. Dora *sits pensively and waits*.

Enter HAROLD

Harold. You are pale, my Dora! but the ruddiest cheek

That ever charm'd the plowman of your wolds
Might wish its rose a lily, could it look
But half as lovely. I was speaking with
Your father, asking his consent — you wish'd me —
That we should marry. He would answer nothing,
I could make nothing of him; but, my flower,
You look so weary and so worn! What is it
Has put you out of heart?

Dora. It puts me in heart
Again to see you; but indeed the state
Of my poor father puts me out of heart.
Is yours yet living?

Harold. No — I told you.

Dora. When?

Harold. Confusion! — Ah well, well! the state we all
Must come to in our spring-and-winter world
If we live long enough! and poor Steer looks
The very type of Age in a picture, bow'd
To the earth he came from, to the grave he goes to,
Beneath the burthen of years.

Dora. More like the picture
Of Christian in my 'Pilgrim's Progress' here,
Bow'd to the dust beneath the burthen of sin.

Harold. Sin! What sin?

Dora. Not his own.

Harold. That nursery tale
Still read, then?

Dora. Yes; our carters and our shepherds
Still find a comfort there.

Harold. Carters and shepherds!

Dora. Scorn! I hate scorn. A soul with no religion —
My mother used to say that such a one
Was without rudder, anchor, compass — might be
Blown every way with every gust and wreck
On any rock; and tho' you are good and gentle,
Yet if thro' any want —

Harold. Of this religion?
Child, read a little history, you will find
The common brotherhood of man has been
Wrong'd by the cruelties of his religions
More than could ever have happen'd thro' the want
Of any or all of them.

Dora. But, O dear friend,
If thro' the want of any — I mean the true one —
And pardon me for saying it — you should ever
Be tempted into doing what might seem
Not altogether worthy of you, I think
That I should break my heart, for you have taught me
To love you.

Harold. What is this? some one been stirring
Against me? he, your rustic amorist,
The polish'd Damon of your pastoral here,
This Dobson of your idyll?

Dora. No, sir, no!

Did you not tell me he was crazed with jealousy,
Had threaten'd even your life, and would say anything?
Did I not promise not to listen to him,
Nor even to see the man?

Harold. Good; then what is it
That makes you talk so dolefully?

Dora. I told you —
My father. Well, indeed, a friend just now,
One that has been much wrong'd, whose griefs are mine,
Was warning me that if a gentleman
Should wed a farmer's daughter, he would be
Sooner or later shamed of her among
The ladies, born his equals.

Harold. More fool he!
What, I that have been call'd a Socialist,
A Communist, a Nihilist — what you will! —

Dora. What are all these?

Harold. Utopian idiotcies.
They did not last three Junes. Such rampant weeds
Strangle each other, die, and make the soil
For Cæsars, Cromwells, and Napoleons
To root their power in. I have freed myself
From all such dreams, and some will say because
I have inherited my uncle. Let them.
But — shamed of you, my empress! I should prize
The pearl of beauty, even if I found it
Dark with the soot of slums.

Dora. But I can tell you,
We Steers are of old blood, tho' we be fallen.
See there our shield. (*Pointing to arms on mantelpiece.*)
For I have heard the Steers
Had land in Saxon times; and your own name
Of Harold sounds so English and so old
I am sure you must be proud of it.

Harold. Not I!
As yet I scarcely feel it mine. I took it
For some three thousand acres. I have land now
And wealth, and lay both at your feet.

Dora. And *what* was
Your name before?

Harold. Come, come, my girl, enough
Of this strange talk. I love you, and you me.
True, I have held opinions, hold some still,
Which you would scarce approve of; for all that,
I am a man not prone to jealousies,
Caprices, humors, moods, but very ready
To make allowances, and mighty slow
To feel offences. Nay, I do believe
I could forgive — well, almost anything —
And that more freely than your formal priest,
Because I know more fully than *he* can
What poor earthworms are all and each of us,
Here crawling in this boundless Nature. Dora,
If marriage ever brought a woman happiness
I doubt not I can make you happy.

Dora. You make me
Happy already.

Harold. And I never said
As much before to any woman living.

Dora. No?

Harold. No! by this true kiss, *you* are the first
I ever have loved truly. [*They kiss each other.*

Eva (*with a wild cry*). Philip Edgar!

Harold. The phantom cry! *You* — did *you* hear a cry?

Dora. She must be crying out 'Edgar' in her sleep.

Harold. Who must be crying out 'Edgar' in her sleep?

Dora. Your pardon for a minute. She must be waked.

Harold. Who must be waked?

Dora. I am not deaf; you fright me.
What ails you?

Harold. Speak.

Dora. You know her, Eva.

Harold. Eva!

[Eva *opens the door and stands in the entry.*

She!

Eva. Make her happy, then, and I forgive you.
[*Falls dead.*

Dora. Happy! What? Edgar? Is it so? Can it be?
They told me so. Yes, yes! I see it all now.

O, she has fainted! Sister, Eva, sister!
He is yours again — he will love *you* again;
I give him back to you again. Look up!
One word, or do but smile! Sweet, do you hear me? [*Puts her hand on* Eva's *heart.*
There, there — the heart, O God! — the poor young heart
Broken at last — all still — and nothing left
To live for. [*Falls on body of her sister.*

Harold. Living — dead — She said 'all still. Nothing to live for.'
She — she knows me — now —
(*A pause.*)
She knew me from the first, she juggled with me,
She hid this sister, told me she was dead —
I have wasted pity on her — not dead now —
No! acting, playing on me, both of them.
They drag the river for her! no, not they!
Playing on me — not dead now — a swoon — a scene —
Yet — how she made her wail as for the dead!

Enter Milly

Milly. Pleäse, Mister 'Arold.

Harold (*roughly*). Well?

Milly. The owd man 's coom'd ageän to 'issen, an' wants
To hev a word wi' ye about the marriage.

Harold. The what?

Milly. The marriage.
Harold. The marriage?
Milly. Yeäs, the marriage.
Granny says marriages be maäde i' 'eaven.
Harold. She lies! They are made in hell.
Child, can't you see?
Tell them to fly for a doctor.
Milly. O, law — yeäs, Sir.
I 'll run for 'im mysen. [*Exit.*
Harold. All silent there,
Yes, deathlike! Dead? I dare not look. If dead,
Were it best to steal away, to spare myself,
And her too, pain, pain, pain?
My curse on all
This world of mud, and all its idiot gleams
Of pleasure, all the foul fatalities
That blast our natural passions into pains!

Enter Dobson

Dobson. You, Master Hedgar, Harold, or whativer
They calls ye, for I warrants that ye goäs
By haäfe a scoor o' naämes — out o' the chaumber! [*Dragging him past the body.*
Harold. Not that way, man! Curse on your brutal strength!
I cannot pass that way.
Dobson. Out o' the chaumber!
I 'll mash tha into nowt.

Harold. The mere wild-beast!

Dobson. Out o' the chaumber, dang tha!

Harold. Lout, churl, clown!

[*While they are shouting and struggling* Dora *rises and comes between them.*

Dora (*to* Dobson). Peace, let him be; it is the chamber of Death!

Sir, you are tenfold more a gentleman,
A hundred times more worth a woman's love,
Than this, this — but I waste no words upon him:
His wickedness is like my wretchedness —
Beyond all language.
(*To* Harold). You — you see her there!
Only fifteen when first you came on her,
And then the sweetest flower of all the wolds,
So lovely in the promise of her May,
So winsome in her grace and gaiety,
So loved by all the village people here,
So happy in herself and in her home —

Dobson (*agitated*). Theer, theer! ha' done. I can't abeär to see her. [*Exit.*

Dora. A child, and all as trustful as a child!
Five years of shame and suffering broke the heart
That only beat for you; and he, the father,
Thro' that dishonor which you brought upon us,
Has lost his health, his eyesight, even his mind.

Harold (*covering his face*). Enough!

Dora. It seem'd so; only there was left

A second daughter, and to her you came
Veiling one sin to act another.

Harold. No!
You wrong me there! hear, hear me! I wish'd, if you — [*Pauses.*

Dora. If I —

Harold. Could love me, could be brought to love me
As I loved you —

Dora. What then?

Harold. I wish'd, I hoped
To make, to make —

Dora. *What* did you hope to make?

Harold. 'T were best to make an end of my lost life.
O Dora, Dora!

Dora. *What* did you hope to make?

Harold. Make, make! I cannot find the word — forgive it —
Amends.

Dora. For what? to whom?

Harold. To him, to you!
[*Falling at her feet.*

Dora. To *him!* to *me!*
No, not with all your wealth,
Your land, your life! Out in the fiercest storm
That ever made earth tremble — he, nor I —
The shelter of *your* roof — not for one moment —
Nothing from *you!*

Sunk in the deepest pit of pauperism,
Push'd from all doors as if we bore the plague,
Smitten with fever in the open field,
Laid famine-stricken at the gates of Death —
Nothing from you!
But she there — her last word
Forgave — and I forgive you. If you ever
Forgive yourself, you are even lower and baser
Than even I can well believe you. Go!

[*He lies at her feet. Curtain falls.*

CROSSING THE BAR

Sunset and evening star,
  And one clear call for me!
And may there be no moaning of the bar,
  When I put out to sea,

But such a tide as moving seems asleep,
  Too full for sound and foam,
When that which drew from out the boundless deep
  Turns again home.

Twilight and evening bell,
  And after that the dark!
And may there be no sadness of farewell,
  When I embark;

For tho' from out our bourne of Time and Place
  The flood may bear me far,
I hope to see my Pilot face to face
  When I have crost the bar.

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